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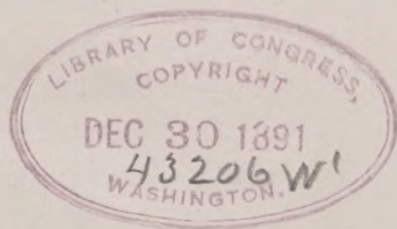


HENRY ELWOOD,

A THEOLOGICAL NOVEL.

✓
BY MILTON R. SCOTT.

"Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one unceasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns!"
—TENNYSON.



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CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. "PROMISE AND POTENCY"	5
II. CHOICE AND CONSECRATION	16
III. AIMING AND ASPIRING	22
IV. QUESTIONS AND QUERIES	25
V. FEARS AND FOREBODINGS	32
VI. INTEREST AND INFLUENCE	39
VII. GRACE AND GRIT	46
VIII. MYSTERIES AND MISERIES	53
IX. INSPIRATION AND INTERROGATION	57
X. DOUBT AND DARKNESS	62
XI. DUTY AND DEVOTION	68
XII. FATE AND FAITH	74
XIII. PROMISE AND PROSPECT	82
XIV. HOPING AND HELPING	86
XV. CREED AND CONFESSION	92
XVI. WHY AND WHEREFORE	97
XVII. STRIFE AND STRUGGLE	101
XVIII. "LIVE AND LEARN"	110
XIX. DESIRE AND DISAPPOINTMENT	119
XX. COUNSEL AND CONSIDERATION	123
XXI. COUNSEL AND COMFORT	128
XXII. PLOTTING AND PLANNING	135
XXIII. "PROGRESS AND POVERTY"	143

CHAP.	PAGE
XXIV. WEALTH AND WORTH	152
XXV. POWER AND PRECISION	160
XXVI. WOOING AND WAITING	166
XXVII. PASTOR AND PEOPLE	174
XXVIII. DOCTORS AND DOCTRINES	178
XXIX. WOOING AND WORKING	189
XXX. WOOING AND WINNING	194
XXXI. WORK AND WORRY	202
XXXII. MARRIED AND MATED	208
XXXIII. TENANTS AND TENEMENTS	215
XXXIV. PRAYER AND PROVIDENCE	221
XXXV. AFFECTION AND AFFLICTION	229
XXXVI. SHADES AND SHADOWS	233
XXXVII. PRISONS AND PRISONERS	239
XXXVIII. SIN AND SORROW	245
XXXIX. SERVICE AND SACRIFICE	253
XL. WORK AND WAGES	258
XLI. SIGNS AND SYMBOLS	265
XLII. DOGMAS AND DOCTRINES	269
XLIII. POINT AND PURPOSE	275
XLIV. TRIAL AND TRIUMPH	281
XLV. ADVICE AND ADMONITION	287
XLVI. CONFERENCE AND CONSULTATION	293
XLVII. LIGHT AND LIBERTY	299
XLVIII. MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY	309

CHAPTER I.

"PROMISE AND POTENCY."

HENRY ELWOOD, the "hero" of our story—if "hero" he should be called—was born in the year 185—, in the village of Arcadia, in the state of X——; and in the month of May, 187—, we find him a member of the Senior class of Beulah College in the same state.

He had just been awarded the highest honors of his class, and was about to prepare his "oration," to be pronounced on Commencement day, when he should receive his degree of "A. B.," and launch his bark, as the phrase goes, upon the sea of active life.

Elwood's character at this time was far from being fully formed—perhaps we should say *evolved*—but he had been a hard and faithful student, and had scrupulously avoided all cheats and shams; so that whatever may be thought of the value or importance of the honor conferred upon him, it could be truly said, that it was fairly and honorably won.

Ah, that men and women everywhere could realize that it is not *getting* the prizes of life, but *earning* them, that makes our lives worth living!

Elwood had chosen as the subject of his oration, "The Value of a Classical Education;" and without accusing him of vanity, it may be said that he considered it a comparatively easy task to produce such a composition as would satisfy himself and also secure the favorable notice of the Faculty and his fellow-students.

There was nothing dry or irksome to him in the study of the Latin and Greek; on the contrary, his intellect always rejoiced—almost thrilled—in the work;—and the satisfaction he obtained from it was not to be measured by any material or merely utilitarian standard.

The light of the sun needs no demonstration of its value to one whose eyes are wide-open, nor the heat of a furnace to one who feels its glow and power!

In addition to the conscious mental development that he had derived from the study of Latin and Greek, he had accepted without question all the statements and arguments of the College Professors as to the advantages of the classical course over all others; and so intense and enthusiastic had been his application to all the tasks set before him, that he had never had more than a passing doubt about the perfection of the wisdom that had made Latin and Greek so prominent in the College course.

If Elwood attached more importance to a graduating address than justly belongs to it, let him not be blamed therefor—he *always* wanted to do good work. His standard was a very high one; and while he was not altogether free from the desire to surpass his fellow-students—who among all the sons of men can claim to love excellence solely for its own sake?—it may be truly said that he would have given his best effort to the preparation of his address, if it had been the only one to be delivered on Commencement day.

What an indescribable charm is given to all high and noble workmanship, whether of man or woman, when we know that it accords with the worker's fixed habit and character!

After studying and "reading up" and fully charging his mind with all the points and arguments in favor of the classical course of study that he could command, he at length sat down to write. Every thought was expressed

as clearly and concisely as possible; and his position was enforced with all the reasons and illustrations within his reach; and very soon as much "matter" was produced as the time allotted for his oration would permit him to deliver—but he was not satisfied!

Again and again he read over what he had written; searched diligently for grammatical and rhetorical errors, and corrected all he found; transposed a number of sentences; struck out a few passages, and inserted others that seemed more pertinent; reviewed his text-books on "Rhetoric" and "Logic;" and so forth; and so forth!

But all in vain!

What a relief it would be, he distinctly thought, if he had no one to address but the Faculty and his fellow-students. How easy to convince *them* that his position was correct and his arguments unanswerable.

But the more he thought of the miscellaneous audience he was to meet the more unsatisfactory his production became.

Very many College graduates would have gotten out of this dilemma with the comforting reflection that their production was too "deep" for the audience they were to address; but Elwood's sense was too clear and strong for such a cordial as this. His habit with all difficult problems that came before him was to *master* them; and he firmly resolved to master this one.

As soon as this determination was formed in his mind, all the objections he had ever heard to the study of Latin and Greek came rushing upon his recollection as so many demons refusing to be exorcised; and for the first time in his life Henry Elwood realized that the value of a classical education was a question with two sides—if not more!

The name of Herbert Spencer was not as widely known at that time as it is now: but his books had found

their way into the College library; and chancing to see in some newspaper a quotation from Mr. Spencer's work on "Education," that seemed to him very pertinent and pungent, Elwood made haste to secure the book, and went through the first chapter on "What Knowledge Is of the Most Worth?" without rest or interruption. Spencer's depreciation of the study of languages and his manner of urging the claims of physical science almost took the young man's breath away; but his mental grit and habit forbade the "immediate and unconditional surrender" of all opposing opinions, that the distinguished author would seem to require of his readers.

In spite of Spencer's elaborate arguments and emphatic *assertions* as to the superior value of physical science, the young man had the unanswerable testimony of his own consciousness that the study of Latin and Greek was profitable; and for the time being this was all the material he had, from which to *re-construct* the oration that was bearing so heavily upon his mind.

He was alone with his thought!

The next day he saw a pamphlet containing an address delivered before the students of Hiram College by Gen. James A. Garfield, who, besides his brilliant military record, was already recognized as one of the leading members of the Congress of the United States.

As soon as Elwood saw the title-page of this pamphlet, the fond hope arose in his breast that here was the very light that he wanted—but how disappointed he was!

Instead of answering and refuting Mr. Spencer's arguments, the distinguished soldier and statesman took almost precisely the same position; and his utterances possessed a force and clearness that no one could fail to appreciate.

After going through the body of Garfield's address with the feeling of one who realizes that the last stone in the foundation of his house is about to give way, what an

inexpressible and *suggestive* relief it was to find at the close that it was only the amount of time given to the study of Latin and Greek that was condemned, and that, after all, "there are most weighty reasons why Latin and Greek should be retained as a part of a liberal education." This might be called but a crumb of comfort; but to one in Elwood's peculiar mental condition it was a crumb of choicest flavor; and he seized it with the avidity of one who was very hungry, if not well-nigh starved.

Those "most weighty reasons"—where were they to be found?

Was there, indeed, no place to seek for them except in the depths of his own poor consciousness?

The village of Beulah is situated on the river of the same name, and is surrounded with a goodly number of noble hills, from the top of which is obtained a view of the surrounding country extending several miles in every direction. Elwood had frequently climbed these hills during his College course, and always enjoyed the view of Nature which they gave him. Sometimes this was in company with some of his fellow-students, but most frequently alone. Especially when he encountered a difficult problem in any of his studies that defied all his efforts at solution would he seek the respite and exhilaration that a walk upon these hills never failed to give him. And nearly always he came back to his room with victory on his brow!

Who can understand the responses of sky and tree and cloud and grass and flower and water and sunshine to all the struggles and aspirations of the human soul?

The vain and the proud and the evil-minded shall never comprehend the ministry of Mother Nature; but to all who are clean and healthy in body and mind she gives a power and inspiration that is the very wine of the gods!

And so on this May afternoon, soon after his perusal

of Gen. Garfield's address, Elwood started on his favorite walk. In a very few minutes he reached the top of a hill directly overlooking the river, which was then at a very high stage of water on account of recent rains.

Elwood did not have Ruskin's peculiar appreciation of the sublimity of hills and mountains, nor had he, like Emerson, penetrated very far into the depths of Nature's mysteries; but he loved all the sights and sounds and odors that came to him; and his spirit was greatly elated by the broad and diversified view of Nature which his high standpoint gave him. He looked up and down the river, and listened to the flow of its waters, until he *felt* the power of its tide; he surveyed the sky and clouds, until his soul rose to their heights; and he drank in the combined influence of all the elements around him, until he not only realized that the problem before him would surely be solved, but he felt within himself the "promise and potency" of a grand and successful life!

Let no man despise books, and theories, and creeds, and catechisms, and confessions, and doctrines, and formulas. These are indeed the ladders by which we may climb upward and heaven-ward; but whoever would *fully know the truth* must speak with God and Nature face to face!

In this high mood Elwood started back to the College grounds; but before he reached the foot of the hill, he unexpectedly met Mr. Joseph Carroll, Superintendent of the Beulah public schools, with whom he had some acquaintance.

Their greeting was very cordial; and after introducing to Elwood his daughter Alice, a young woman yet in her teens (the reader must not be curious about her exact age) by whom he was accompanied, Mr. Carroll proposed that they should walk over the hill together: which proposition was gladly accepted by Elwood; for as soon he saw Mr. Carroll, he remembered having heard him speak of

Herbert Spencer's work on "Education" as a book that should be read by every parent and teacher, and he now felt a very earnest desire to talk with him farther concerning Mr. Spencer's peculiar views and theories.

As soon as they reached the shade of a noble oak on the summit of the hill, and seated themselves on the grass that they might enjoy the grand view before them, Elwood made some allusion to Spencer, and asked Mr. Carroll if he accepted all the views advanced in the work before mentioned.

"Certainly not all of them," was the prompt reply; "Mr. Spencer is very high authority, but he is neither 'inerrant' nor 'infallible.' Education is too high and noble an art to be reduced to any man's formulated theories, however excellent they may be."

How could Elwood fail to notice the brightness of Alice Carroll's face, showing how clearly she understood her father's meaning and appreciated the force of his words!

"What do you think of the arguments he uses against the study of languages and in favor of the sciences?" asked the young man with some eagerness.

"If all that Mr. Spencer says about the value of science be admitted," was the reply, "it does not follow that the study of the languages is of *no* value, or of as little value as he would have us believe. At any rate, no one can understand the *grammar* of his own language, unless he learns to compare it with that of other languages; and I think no better basis can be found for this study than the Latin—as such I believe it has a 'practical' value that can hardly be estimated too highly."

"In his sweeping condemnation of the study of language," continued Mr. Carroll, "it seems to me that Spencer plays the part of a special pleader rather

than that of a philosopher. At any rate, he does not seem to appreciate the value of language study as a means of mental discipline, or rather of mental *exercise*—I like that term better.”

“But don’t you think that he lays too much stress on the *practical* value of science?” asked Elwood.

“Spencer’s standard of value is a very high one,” was Mr. Carroll’s response; “but he overlooks the fact, that, as the human body, on account of its complicated structure, requires a *variety* of both food and exercise, so the human mind needs a variety of knowledge, and likewise a variety of exercise, or discipline, as you please. If direct scientific training were as all-important as Mr. Spencer represents, why does he not rule out the higher mathematics as well as the languages? It would also be consistent with his theory to demand that less time be given to the study of Arithmetic, as very little of that is *directly* practical.”

“Do you think there is more discipline in the study of languages than of mathematics?” inquired Elwood.

“The difference is in kind rather than in degree,” was the response; “and it is therefore very hard to make a direct comparison: but whatever may be claimed for the discipline of mathematics, I still believe that in the analytical study of the Latin and Greek there is a training of the taste and judgment, that can not be had in mathematics or the physical sciences on account of their definiteness and exactness.” But after all the value of all studies in schools and colleges depends on *how they are taught*.”

Elwood’s face assumed a puzzled aspect at this. He looked at Mr. Carroll and then at his daughter, and said inquiringly: “I do not quite understand you. How can the manner of teaching be so important?”

"Why," said Mr. Carroll in reply, "in spite of all Herbert Spencer's elaborate reasoning in his first chapter to show the superior value of Science, in his second chapter he takes up the teaching of mathematics, drawing and other branches, and shows most admirably how they should all be taught so as to draw out and develop the powers of pupils and lead them to make observations and investigations of their own. I have no doubt Mr. Spencer thinks the physical sciences should be taught on the same principle that he urges for the teaching of mathematics; but from the reading of his first chapter one would almost conclude that the only important thing is to get physical facts into the mind! It is very little—I mean comparatively very little—scientific knowledge that any one can acquire at best; and when he engages in any employment or business he will have to learn its details, and, in a certain sense, unlearn what he has learned at school; but if his faculties have been properly trained, his chances for success in life will be greatly increased, and what is still more important, he will be a larger-minded and nobler man."

"Then you think that in educational work every thing depends on the character and qualifications of the teacher?"

"I could hardly speak too emphatically on this point. My experience with the various 'methods,' 'systems' and 'improvements' in education brings me to the conclusion, that the *living teacher* is greater than all of them, and more important than all of them."

There was a moment's pause, after which Mr. Carroll continued: "As we look up and down Beulah river and over these hills to-day, all Nature is bright and beautiful, and we are intensely delighted with every object that meets our eyes; and all because the sun is shining upon us

so brightly. I know of nothing to which I could so fitly liken the work of a teacher. He or she should at least *reflect* the light of the sun of truth upon every lesson and every branch of study, so that the minds of all his pupils may be enlivened and quickened thereby. Yes, let me repeat," he added with a glow of enthusiasm on his face, "from the lips of a noble teacher all knowledge is noble, all knowledge is practical, and I had almost said, all knowledge is divine."

These utterances of Mr. Carroll sounded like a revelation to Elwood; but he ventured no expression or inquiry in response, and presently Mr. Carroll continued: "I often think that preachers as well as teachers do not fully realize the importance of the *spirit* in which their work is performed. I am never seriously concerned about the doctrines and dogmas that a preacher believes, and I care not whether he be strictly 'orthodox' or not, provided he has power to interest his people in moral issues, and can give inspiration and direction to their moral faculties."

This remark concerning preachers made no particular impression on Elwood at the time; but in after years he remembered it as with the clearness of a sunbeam!

"But you do not expect a teacher to do any part of his pupils' work for them?" he asked, after a moment's reflection.

"By no means, was the prompt reply; "on the contrary, the true teacher is the one who so *enlightens* and inspires his pupils as to secure the greatest possible activity and self-development on their part; and, on the same principle, I believe that the preacher who wants to save people's souls must inspire them to work out their own salvation."

In the entire conversation on the subject of education between Elwood and Mr. Carroll, which closed with this

utterance of the latter, Alice Carroll took no part, except to cast an occasional glance from one of the men to the other; but Elwood distinctly thought her the most interesting *listener* he had ever met; and the words of her father seemed so much clearer to him from the reflection of her eyes and face!

What divine interpreters ye are, O women thus highly gifted!

CHAPTER II.

CHOICE AND CONSECRATION.

Henry Elwood's mother was a Presbyterian, but a woman of Quaker descent; and on the evening of his interview with Supt. Carroll he received the following letter from her:

ARCADIA, May —, 187—,

MY DEAR HENRY:

I fear it will be impossible for me to attend your coming Commencement exercises, much as I would desire to do so.

How swiftly time flies, Henry! It seems so short a time since you began your College course; and now it is but a few weeks until you will graduate and be ready to prepare yourself for some business or profession.

You know, Henry, that although your father never sought to dictate your course while he was living, yet he always cherished the hope that you would become a Presbyterian minister; and such, too, has been my desire, especially since you entered College—that is, if the Spirit of the Lord should so direct you. You have no doubt begun to think seriously about the matter yourself; and I hope you are earnestly praying for divine direction. I have always found in my own experience, Henry, that when I have waited in patience and humility for the guidance of the Spirit I have not been disappointed.

I went over to see your old schoolmate and playmate, Frank Newcomb, yesterday. He is getting very feeble; and although consumption is a very hard disease to understand, I do not believe he can live many weeks longer. He is confined to his bed most of the time and does not talk much; but as soon as I spoke to him he began to ask questions about you, and wanted to know how you were getting along at College and whether you came out at the head of your class; and when I told him you did, he said you were the hardest boy to beat either in study or play that he ever

knew, although you always played fairly, and would never take any advantage of the other boys.

It must have been an hour or two that I staid with him; and he talked about you nearly all the time. When I told him you would be home in a few weeks, his face brightened up, and he expressed the hope that he could go hunting and fishing with you again.

And when I started home Mrs. Newcomb followed me out to the gate, and told me that Frank talks a great deal about you, and that when he got your letter a few weeks ago, it did him so much good, that he sat up all day and read it over several times. Couldn't you write to him often, Henry? It would do him more good than you can imagine.

Going down street one day last week I met Mrs. Maloney, mother of the little Irish girl who broke through the ice while skating when you were at home last winter and was taken out by you so nearly dead. She almost overwhelmed me with blessings both for you and myself.

"Shure, Mishtress Ilwood," she said to me, "you ought to be vary proud to have sich a son as would plunge into the cowl'd water for the sake of a little girl like Maggie, when he didn't know whither she was dead or alive, and didn't even know as he'd git out alive hissif! All the ither min and and byes that were there thought they could do nuthin' fur her; but your Hinry broke right through the ice and picked her up, although she didn't know innny thing for some time afther they browt her home. The good Lord will surely bliss a young mon like that, an' shure, he will bliss you, too, jist because you are his mither!"

Miss Jenkins often tells me how proud she feels that she had so much to do with your early education, as you always studied so hard and learned all your lessons so well when you were a small boy. The last time I saw her she repeated the story I had almost forgotten, how she caught Frank Newcomb in some mischief while he was sitting beside you and was about to punish him, when you quickly stood up, and told her she ought to punish you too, as you deserved it just as much as he did. She said she always doubted whether you were as much to blame as you claimed to be; but after you said what you did, she couldn't punish either of you—and she never had any trouble with Frank after that. She confidently predicts a successful career for you, whatever business or profession you may enter.

May —, 187—.—I laid this letter away a few days ago, thinking

there might be something more I would want to say to you ; and since that time I have received a rather lengthy visit from Mr. Edwards, our minister.

The good man has been thinking a great deal about you lately, and is very anxious for you to become a Presbyterian minister.

"Mrs. Elwood," he said to me, "you know how much interest I have always felt in Henry, especially since he professed conversion and joined the church ; and I have thought he would make an excellent and useful minister—if he should receive a call to that sacred office," he added after a moment's pause.

"Yes, Mr. Edwards," I said to him in reply, "I have myself thought that Henry ought to be a minister, but have not thought it best to urge the matter upon him, believing that the choice of that profession, if made at all, ought to be made by himself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

"I agree with you there," he replied, "and have refrained from saying anything to him myself for the same reason ; but now that he is about to graduate and must soon make choice of a profession, I have felt that if he is indeed called to the ministry, we might help him to hear and understand the call."

He said all this with so much feeling and in so earnest a tone, that I inquired *why* he was so anxious to have you become a minister, and what reasons he had for thinking you would be more useful in that profession than in any other.

"In the first place," he replied, "without intending to flatter you, Henry has gifts and talents that I think would eminently fit him for the ministry. In addition to all his mental endowments, he has a clear strong voice and a good physical constitution. He has already received an excellent collegiate education ; and if he could now take a thorough theological course and become well-versed in all the doctrines of the church, he would, I firmly believe, become a very useful preacher, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

He remained silent a few minutes and then continued : "I feel very sad, Mrs. Elwood, about the decay of sound doctrine in these latter days, and I sometimes fear it is as great in the church and among professors of religion (although I shudder at the thought) as it is in the world ; and I have thought, from my knowledge of Henry's character, that he could be depended on to preach the doctrines of the Bible whether they were popular or not, and that he would stand by the truth whatever it might cost him to do so."

"You don't think *Infidelity* is increasing?" I asked.

"Not the bold and outspoken infidelity we used to meet," he answered, "but a peculiar *indifference* to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, indicating that people do not care whether they are true or not. Infidels used to denounce the Bible and deny that is the word of God; now they just call it a 'good book,' and defy us to prove that there is any more inspiration in it than in many other good books. I also fear that a great many church-members, whatever reverence they may still have for the book, do not recognize its *authority* as they once did."

"But are not the churches as active as ever in their efforts to do good, and are they not very zealous in works of charity and benevolence?" I here inquired.

He stopped to think a moment before answering, and then said: "I know, Mrs. Elwood, that they are doing a great deal of humanitarian work; but how is it possible to accomplish anything in the Lord's vineyard unless you stand upon his truth and refuse to be shaken from it? You may have ever so well-built a house; but unless it rests upon a good foundation, it can not stand against the rains and storms to which it is exposed. So we must have the right beliefs and refuse to give them up, else all our efforts to serve the Master will be in vain."

"What particular doctrines do the people appear to be giving up?" I asked.

"Alas, nearly all of them, I sometimes fear," he answered with increased seriousness. "They are not only denying that there is such a place as hell, but also seem to be losing faith in the fundamental doctrines of the Fall and the Atonement; and from the way things are tending, it will not be long until they begin to question the divinity of Christ—and after that we might as well not claim to have any Christianity at all."

"To what do you attribute this change in the people's beliefs?" I asked.

"I hardly know," he said, "unless it be due to the prevailing worldliness and indifference to spiritual things; and I even fear that the preachers are not as faithful in declaring the whole counsel of God as they once were. They seem too anxious to please and *satisfy* the people, instead of simply delivering their message, whether people are satisfied or not. I blame myself for not preaching the doctrines of the church more than I do, and fear I shall not escape condemnation in the day of judgment. When I began my ministry I resolved that with the divine blessing I would preach a doctrinal sermon at least once a month, but only did so for a year or two, and now I only preach one occasionally; in fact," (in spite of the seriousness with which he spoke

he could not help smiling) "I can hardly tell how long it has been since I preached a sermon that was strictly doctrinal. And the only excuse I can offer—if a minister of Christ may permit himself to harbor such an excuse—is, that, so far as I know, I preach as many doctrinal sermons as any of my brethren in the ministry. At the last meeting of our Presbytery we had a discussion on the decay of doctrinal preaching in the church, in which nearly all the ministers deplored the evil and reproached themselves for its existence; but none of them could assign its cause or prescribe a satisfactory remedy."

"But, Mr. Edwards," said I, "the people do not accuse you of unfaithfulness; and I have heard several of them say, that you ought to have a good vacation an account of the hard work you have done and the interest you have manifested in the welfare of the community."

His face brightened up at this for a moment or two, but soon resumed its serious aspect as he replied: "I am not insensible to the approbation of my fellow-men; but it is far more important for me to have the approval of my Heavenly Master, and I fear I shall not secure this, unless I preach his doctrines more faithfully than I have done."

I here suggested to him, that perhaps he was being led in a way that he knew not, and that if a minister were faithful to the light that was given to him, he would not be condemned. This seemed to comfort him a great deal; and he again began to talk about you, repeating his desire to see you enter the ministry, and said, if I thought best, he would write to you on the subject himself. I told him I could see no objection to his doing so, and that you would certainly be grateful for any counsel or advice he might give you.

I will not say any thing more to you myself, as this letter is already too long; but as it is from your mother, I know you will read it all; and I have full confidence that the same Divine Spirit, that inspired and directed the prophets and righteous men of old, will now lead you in the right way, and keep you ever true and noble and faithful.

From Your Affectionate Mother,

EMMA ELWOOD.

The mother's letter was none too long for the young man's perusal. Several times he read it over, frequently pausing for reflection; and at the hour of midnight it was still in his hands.

Only in brief outline can we describe the feelings it awakened in his breast. All the experiences and associations of his childhood came rushing upon his recollection. He felt a new appreciation of his parents' love and sympathy; and the return that he ought to make to the mother who still lived was presented to him more clearly than he had ever seen it before.

And as with full heart and moistened eyes he dwelt upon these points, there came to him, like a revelation from the skies, the realization that the value of his education was not a matter of Rhetoric or Logic, but must be proven by the work of his life; and he saw, as with the clearness of the morning light, that whatever benefit he might derive from the study of languages or mathematics or science or history, his success must at last depend on his consecration, perhaps his immolation, upon the altar of duty, and his devotion, not to self-service, but to the service of others.

He wrestled with these high thoughts until the near approach of morning; and then, with his knees bent on the floor and his soul lifted to the heavens above him, he prayed most earnestly that he might choose the right course and follow it to the end of his days.

And there came to him a still small voice, almost audible, which said, "Amen! and Amen!"

Say, if you will, O doubters and cavilers, that the sun will not shine on the budding flowers—say even that the mother will not hear her baby's cry;—but do not dare to say, that the human soul may not invoke the Wisdom and Power of the Highest, and receive an answer to its every utterance and every accent!

God is; and therefore no man shall ever seek his face in vain!

CHAPTER III.

AIMING AND ASPIRING.

"Father," said Alice Carroll the morning after the interview between Mr. Carroll and Henry Elwood, as heretofore narrated, "how long have you been acquainted with Mr. Elwood?"

"It is about a year since I first met him," he answered, with a slight expression of surprise on his face. "He is one of the College graduates of this year, and I consider him a very talented and promising young man."

"Didn't it seem strange to you, that he should inquire about the study of Latin and Greek after he has finished his collegiate course?" she again inquired. "What difference does it make to him now what Herbert Spencer may think about the dead languages? He ought to know himself what studies have been most profitable to him."

"I never thought what reasons he had for asking me the questions he did; but I presume the subject of classical education was on his mind, and he wanted to get these points settled. He is quite a fellow to think and reason for himself."

"He seemed very much interested in the whole subject of Education; perhaps he is preparing his Commencement address on some educational topic, and wanted all the information he could get upon it."

"Very likely, Alice."

"Do you expect to attend the Commencement exercises this year, father?"

"I nearly always do so, but why do you ask?"

"I have some curiosity in reference to Mr. Elwood's subject and the kind of an oration he will have, and I also think I would like to hear *all* the Commencement addresses this year," she answered, with a frankness and earnestness that quite surprised her father.

"These graduating orations are generally more interesting to the speakers and their immediate friends and relatives than to any one else," he replied; "but I believe I shall want to hear Mr. Elwood myself."

"Father"—speaking in a much more thoughtful tone—"I have often heard you speak of the teacher's profession as being so grand and noble, but never quite like you did yesterday while you were talking to Mr. Elwood."

"Why, Alice, I don't understand you. Did I say any thing more to Mr. Elwood than you have heard me say to others?"

"Perhaps not," she answered, with the slightest color in her face; "but, although I have always wanted to be a teacher, I never before so clearly realized how noble a profession it is. I lay awake till nearly midnight, thinking about all you said to him, and how important it would be for me, if I ever became a teacher, to be well qualified for the work."

"You have another year to study before you graduate in the High School, Alice."

"Do you think I ought to be satisfied with that?" she asked somewhat eagerly, but checking herself, continued in a subdued tone: "but this is more of an opportunity than most girls have, and I must be grateful for it, and improve it as faithfully as possible—after that——"

"It will be more than a year before 'after that' comes around, Alice."

As his daughter had never before expressed a desire for anything beyond the High School course of study,

Mr. Carroll was not quite prepared to respond to her newly born aspirations—or to account for them!

“I can do a great deal of studying in the course of a year,” she answered in a very lively tone; and then more seriously: “you have often spoken of Herbert Spencer’s work on ‘Education’ as being so desirable a book for teachers—do you mean Sunday School teachers too? Do you think I could learn anything from it that would help me in teaching my Sunday School class?”

“His chapter on ‘Moral Education’ is addressed to parents rather than to teachers; but it contains many points that even Sunday School teachers might study with profit; especially his fundamental principle that children should be taught to exercise their own faculties upon questions of conduct, and should be encouraged, as far as possible, to *find out* for themselves what is right and what is wrong. But Sunday School teachers, like all other teachers, must find their own way to interest and instruct their pupils. You have already found that out, have you not?”

“Yes,” she replied, with a decided glow on her face, “and how easy it is to teach them a lesson when they are *interested* in it. I have such a fine class of boys and girls too, and I am becoming more and more attached to all of them. I never knew till I began teaching in Sunday School what Jesus meant when he said that we must be converted and become like little children before we can enter the kingdom of heaven. It seems to me I learn more from teaching my class every Sunday than they can possibly learn from me.”

Mr. Carroll’s heart thrilled with just pride as he listened to these words, although he was accustomed to being surprised at the clearness and directness of his daughter’s speech.

CHAPTER IV.

QUESTIONS AND QUERIES.

But it is time that some of Elwood's classmates were introduced to the reader.

Homer Vernon was about the same age as Elwood, and had been his room mate during their entire College course. Vernon's parents were Presbyterians of the straitest sect—honest, upright and God-fearing. Very early in life Homer had been taken to the Sunday School, where he had been taught the Shorter Catechism and the leading doctrines of the Confession of Faith, as well as the rules and principles of a strict morality. Very early in life he had been consecrated to the ministry, and throughout his College course he had that profession in view. He stood second to Elwood in scholarship, but he stood second to no one in industry and faithfulness and in purity and uprightness of character.

Vernon gave very little time to the society of the opposite sex, but still enough to win the affections of Miss Clara Martin, daughter of the Methodist minister in Beulah; and a short time before this, the vows of love and troth had passed between them.

George Marvel was several years older than Vernon and Elwood. He was a member of the Freshman class in the spring of 1861, and very early in the summer enlisted in the Union army and went through all the experiences and vicissitudes of four years' military service. He was a good soldier, shirked no duty, shrank from no

danger; and the members of his Regiment said he might easily have secured a commission if he had sought it; but he rose to no higher promotion than that of First (or Orderly) Sergeant in his Company.

During his four years' service he was noted for the interest he took in all his comrades and his willingness to do something for them. When they were sick he was constant in his efforts to relieve their sufferings and promote their comfort. If one of them was tired on the march, Marvel was always ready to carry his gun and knapsack. He would divide his last piece of "hard tack" with those who were hungry; and was frequently known to go on short rations himself, that he might share with comrades, many of whom did not deserve such consideration at his hands. He spent a great deal of his leisure time writing letters for those who could not write, and would read the letters they received from home. When any of the boys were "hard up" for money he would not refuse to give or loan them his last dollar.

That very much of this service was without proper judgment and discrimination and therefore without substantially good results may easily be asserted; but Marvel was always satisfied, and never seemed to seek for anything but the pleasure of doing what he did.

And as he was with his comrades in the army, so he was with his fellow-students when he returned to College in two or three years after the close of the war. If they were sick, his time was at their disposal, no matter what became of his recitations and other College duties. If they needed money, his purse was subject to their command, although it was seldom he had any money to give or loan without becoming himself a borrower.

And so far as his acquaintance with the people of Beulah went, no case of want or distress that came to his notice ever failed to secure whatever sympathy and assist-

ance he could give, without any consideration of his own convenience and interest.

Very frequently it was made plain (to other people) that Marvel's charity and generosity was none too wisely bestowed, and sometimes he received no return but meanness and ingratitude; but he himself was in no wise soured or discouraged on that account; at any rate he continued to give his services wherever they were called for.

To what extent are men and women justified in closing their bowels of compassion against their fellows on account of the unworthiness and imposture that prevail so widely in the earth?

We will not essay to answer this question; but surely no one should be willing to live a life of selfishness because, forsooth, he *might* render service that will not yield the result for which he hopes.

Moreover, it is not for us in all cases—perhaps not in most cases—is it in any case?—to say just what the result of our service should be!

Mark Conklin was about the same age as Marvel, and although he had not been in the army, he had had considerable experience in the world.

When the war broke out, Conklin began to discuss the question whether he ought to become a soldier, but was never able to give it a definite answer, at least not such an answer as caused him to enlist in the army. He felt some sense of duty in the premises, he was very far from being destitute of patriotism, and was strongly impelled by personal pride to enter the service; but all these considerations were not sufficient to induce a decision on his part that he ought to assume the hardships and risks of a soldier's life, although the *question* was never entirely out of his mind.

This habit of constant interrogation in reference to the part he ought to play in the great struggle of the

nation got such a hold upon him that it became his fixed method in dealing with all the issues of life; and in College he was given the nickname of the "Interrogative Case." Whenever he argued upon any subject it was by asking questions; and in the recitation room he both annoyed and amused the Professors by his peculiar and persistent queries, not always pertinent to the subject in hand, but always more or less interesting, and nearly always very suggestive; and it was generally remarked that if he studied at all, he must have some interrogative method of study known only to himself!

His own views on any question were rarely expressed, and then with the rising inflection at the end of nearly every sentence; and his purposes in life and the object he had in view in going through College were points on which he was as silent as the Egyptian Sphinx.

Elwood always enjoyed the spice and flavor of Conklin's interrogatories; and notwithstanding the great difference in the cast of their minds, there was a considerable measure of friendship and association between them during their College course. But with Vernon the case was quite different. He felt no unfriendliness toward Conklin; but it was very annoying, if not painful, to him to have every proposition or opinion incessantly challenged, and that too by one who rarely avowed an opinion of his own.

Vernon wanted to trust in the safety of his fort without the test of perpetual bombardment; he wanted to enjoy the comforts of his house without a continual examination of its foundations; he wanted to study and acquire knowledge without being bored with an incessant analysis and persistent logic that brought no result but a wearisome exercise of his ratiocinative faculties.

But those who please us least do not always have the least influence over us!

A week or two after the events described in our

former chapters Vernon, Elwood, Marvel and Conklin were seated on the grass in the College Campus discussing some arrangements about the coming Comencement; and when they were through with this and were about to separate, Vernon asked Elwood what he thought of the lecture delivered to the students by the President of the College a few days before on the "Object of Life," in which he had taken the position that man is placed on the earth to glorify God and to do service for others, and had enforced that proposition with many pertinent arguments and illustrations.

"I like it exceedingly," said Elwood; "and I don't think that I ever before so clearly understood the purpose for which I was created."

"It seems to me," said Vernon, "that the subject was treated in a masterly manner; and I do not see how any one who believes the Bible and believes there is a God can doubt that the object of our lives is what he said it was."

"How do you know that we have been placed here for any purpose at all?" said Conklin, turning his keen eyes toward them and looking at both intently.

Vernon could not conceal his impatience at the interruption; and Elwood was more surprised than he had ever been before by any of Conklin's interrogatories.

"Not placed here for any purpose at all, exclaimed Elwood, "that would be contrary to reason as well as the Bible!"

"We might as well deny that there is a God as to deny that he had a purpose in placing us on the earth!" said Vernon, in a very positive tone.

"Very well, then," continued Conklin, "how do you know *that* was his purpose?"

"The Bible teaches that very clearly," said they both in the same breath.

“And how do you know that the Bible is correct, even if it does teach what you claim?” was next asked.

“O, if you are going to deny the Bible, what is the use of arguing the point?” said Vernon, very seriously.

“And besides what the Bible says,” said Elwood, with perceptible earnestness, “what else could man have been created for? Surely no other object”—was he thinking of his mother’s letter as he spoke?—“could be so noble and so grand!”

“All which you can doubtless prove by Marvel,” replied Conklin. “Say, Marvel, you have been serving other people all your life, what proof can you furnish to sustain Elwood’s proposition? What have you to show for all your acts of love and mercy—eh?”

“I really don’t know,” said Marvel, a little nonplused; “but I have no regrets for anything I have done or tried to do for others. I have generally done what I felt like doing without troubling myself about the results.”

“And are you certain that you have done people any good with all your efforts? Perhaps you have done them more harm than good?”

Marvel made no reply to this, but looked at his threadbare coat long enough to reflect that the money with which he had intended to purchase a new one, he had but a day or two before loaned to one of the younger students to repair the damage he had done one of the College buildings while out on a frolic a few nights previous.

“And besides,” continued Conklin, “if you think the great object in life is to do good to others, why didn’t you get at it years ago instead of spending four precious years poring over text-books and playing schoolboy generally for the benefit of our worthy and learned Professors?”

“We are here,” said Vernon, with impatience bor-

dering on disgust, "to prepare ourselves for usefulness; and if we have not improved our opportunities, we have none but ourselves to blame."

"And are you any better prepared than when you began your course?" said Conklin, directing a twinkle toward Elwood.

"I guess you won't permit any question to be settled, Conklin," said Elwood, rising up and turning his face toward his room; "you won't let us make anything out of the Universe but an everlasting Interrogation Point."

"Can you prove that it is anything else?" quickly broke in Conklin.

"Whatever question you may raise," replied Elwood in a voice so firm and clear that Conklin put in no more interrogatories, "as surely as the Beulah river was made to carry its waters to the sea, and as surely as the sun was made to give light to the earth, so surely our lives have a meaning and a purpose; and if we devote our best gifts and talents to the service of others, we shall not live in vain!"

Was there a vision of Alice Carroll's face and form before him as he said this?

CHAPTER V.

FEARS AND FOREBODINGS.

The year 187— was the fiftieth anniversary of Beulah College; and arrangements were being made to celebrate the occasion with appropriate exercises during Commencement week. A large attendance of the Alumni from the State of X—— and other States was promised; and it was confidently expected that the various addresses to be delivered would be of an unusually high character.

Dr. Josiah Goodway had been connected with the Faculty for nearly thirty years, during the last twenty of which he had served as President of the institution. Both in the capacity of President and that of Professor he had given complete satisfaction to the Board of Trustees, and had won an enviable reputation as teacher and administrator. His Baccalaureate sermons, especially, were noted for their “soundness,” as well as for their learning and profound thought, and were frequently published in both the secular and the religious newspapers, accompanied with the high commendations which editors and reporters are wont to bestow on public speakers—when they are so minded!

It should be stated in this connection that no taint or suspicion of religious heresy had ever attached itself to any of the Professors or Tutors of the College.

Two or three days after Dr. Goodway began the preparation of this year’s Baccalaureate, which was to be delivered to the graduating class on the Sunday morning

preceding the Commencement exercises, his wife noticed that his appetite was not quite as hearty as usual, that his sleep was a little disturbed, and that there was a slight nervousness in his general air and manner.

Mrs. Goodway's quick eye also divined that the pressure on the Doctor's mind was from some cause in addition to the ordinary cares of his office; and as they were sitting in his study in the evening, she said to him very sympathetically: "Josiah, my dear, isn't there something on your mind that troubles you? You have not had any difficulty with the students or a misunderstanding with any of the Professors?"

"Why, no, Hannah," was his quick reply: "the boys have given us no serious trouble for a long time; and we are all working harmoniously at the preparations for Commencement; but"—he added, after a moment's pause, during which he looked her steadily in the face—"I must confess that I am seriously worried about my Baccalaureate."

"Your Baccalaureate?" she answered, in a tone of decided surprise; "you have never had any difficulty in preparing your Baccalaureate discourses; and they have always been very able ones, and very acceptable too!"

The Doctor's face relaxed a little—he was not too old to relish this encomium from the wife he loved and honored—but he answered in the same serious tone: "I can hardly tell why it is; but this Baccalaureate has already cost me more thought and anxiety than any one, or even all, that I have previously preached."

"It is not because you expect so many of the Alumni and other visitors,?" she said, with a little irony in her tone.

"No; that is rather an encouragement and inspiration; nothing could give me more pleasure than to meet my old graduates and preach to them again."

“Is there any reason why it should be harder to prepare an address to the graduates of this year than to those of other years?”

“I do not quite see why there should be,” he answered very thoughtfully. “I have become better acquainted with these boys than with the members of any class since I became President of the College, and I think I have felt a greater interest in them. It certainly ought not to be harder to address them than other classes.”

“Perhaps your better acquaintance with these young men”—her clearness of tone quite surprised the Doctor—“makes you the more anxious to give them an address that will be suited to them, and one that they will always remember.”

“Yes, Hannah,” he answered very slowly, “and there seems to be such a variety of character among them. Although the war has been over for several years, it appears to have had a great influence upon the lives and characters of our young men. It has made a change that I do not clearly understand; but I am certain there has been a very great change——” and here Dr. Goodway paused and remained silent for several minutes.

Before the conversation was resumed by either of them, the doorbell rang—and Professor Ironsides was invited into the room.

As soon he had shaken hands with the Doctor and Mrs. Goodway, he said in a rather heavy tone; “Dr. Goodway, late as the hour is, I could not resist the inclination to have a talk with you about our graduates of this year. We have certainly never sent out a class concerning whom I have felt so much anxiety.”

The Doctor and his wife looked at each other very intently for a moment or two; and as the Doctor showed no readiness to respond, Mrs. Goodway presently said: “Professor, have not the Faculty always considered this

an unusually talented and promising class?" The Doctor has frequently expressed himself to that effect.

"But in times like these," answered the Professor very solemnly, "something more than talents and scholarship is necessary; and, as I said, I can not help feeling anxious about some of them. I have grave fears, which I am very reluctant to express, that they may not always stand firm in the orthodox faith."

"Whom do you refer to?" asked Dr. Goodway a little nervously—"not Elwood—nor Vernon—nor——"

As the Doctor seemed to pause at this point for a reply, the Professor continued: "I have no fears concerning Vernon. His orthodoxy is of the most positive type; and I feel confident that after he becomes a minister, he will prove one of the most steadfast defenders of the faith to be found in our church."

"Elwood?" again inquired the Doctor. His tone was a very hesitating one, but it caused Mrs. Goodway to await the Professor's answer very intently.

"Prof. Ironsides did not notice this, but paused two or three minutes before speaking, and then said very slowly: "I can not say that I have any definite or positive fears concerning Elwood; still it often happens that the most promising young fellows make shipwreck of faith. While Elwood seems very earnest and devoted in reference to all his religious duties, he has also manifested a peculiar independence that *might* some day lead him astray."

"From what acquaintance I have with him he seems like a very noble and pious young man," responded Mrs. Goodway, with some warmth.

"You can not admire his character and piety more than I do," responded the Professor, in a somewhat apologetic tone; and I trust that any apprehensions I may have about him are entirely without foundation; but what pains

me most is that there should be such a tendency to free-thinking among the students generally."

"Do you think this tendency prevails to a serious extent?" asked Dr. Goodway, a little anxiously. "What special signs of it do you see?"

"They don't say much," was the answer; "but I can see it very plainly in their manner of treating all religious questions. There certainly is not that reverence for the authority of the Scriptures and that implicit acceptance of evangelical doctrines that we used to see among the students. And I have noticed during the recitations on the Evidences of Christianity, that there was a disposition on the part of some to treat the whole matter as still an *open question*, and that even some of our ministerial students seemed to think that the proof from miracle and prophecy was not altogether clear. On one occasion, when I thought I had shown that the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles furnished the most conclusive proof of the truth and divine origin of Christianity, some member of the class, whose name I can not now recall, remarked that he could not why it was necessary for the Almighty to violate or set aside his laws in order to reveal his word; and before I had time to answer this, Mark Conklin, in his peculiar tone, asked how we could tell, with our limited knowledge of Nature's laws, that Christ and his Apostles ever violated or set aside any of them—even if we should believe every thing that is told us by the writers of the New Testament!"

"What answer did you make to that?" asked Dr. Goodway, in a tone indicating that he could not entirely help enjoying the Professor's account of his discomfiture.

"Well, you know how hard it sometimes is to answer Conklin's queries the way he puts them; and as the hour for recitation was about up, I told the class to read their Bibles thoughtfully and prayerfully, and they would find

sufficient evidence of the inspiration of the book as well as its spiritual profit to us."

"You could not have given them better advice than that," remarked Mrs. Goodway, in a very encouraging tone.

The Professor was gratified at this—breathes there a man on the face of the earth who does not enjoy the sincere commendation of a woman he respects?—but he made no sign, except a slight smile, and then responded: "Of course, Mrs. Goodway, we rely on these internal evidences to make the foundations of our faith complete; but it is with the most serious concern that I notice a disposition on the part of our students to treat the miracles and prophecies so lightly."

"There seems to be such a tendency in the public mind also, at least I have thought that such is the case," said Dr. Goodway; "but have we not good reason to believe, that if less attention is paid to the external evidences of Christianity, the internal evidences are appreciated more highly than ever before?"

"I hope you are right about that," responded the Professor, with a little more light in his face; "still I shall tremble for the fate of our holy religion, if the time ever comes that the people lose all faith in miracles and prophecies."

"Do you think there is danger of that?" asked the Doctor.

"I sincerely trust not; but who can tell how far we shall go in the direction we are now tending?" was the response. "Many of our ministers have practically ceased to preach the distinctive doctrines of Calvinism; and I would not be surprised to see a demand for a revision of our Confession of Faith before the close of this century! And if they once begin to revise the Westminster Confession and Catechism, they will next deny the 'inerrancy' of the Scriptures—where will it all end, Dr.

way? Is there not something to be done by us to protect the students whom we graduate from year to year from the blighting influence of Rationalism and Infidelity?’

“I quite agree with you,” answered the Doctor, “that our young men should be well fortified in their religious faith, and be prepared, as fully as we can possibly prepare them, for the work of their lives; and just before you came in I was talking to Mrs. Goodway about the kind of a Baccalaureate sermon I ought to preach this year. I am by no means free from solicitude concerning the members of this class; but I trust that the Spirit of all truth will not forsake them, and that the ark of the Divine covenant will always abide in our College.”

“I hope you are right,” Prof. Ironsides answered a little more cheerfully as he rose to depart; “and I trust the Lord will enable you to preach to the graduating class in such a manner as to guard them from all doubt and error; for there will be many departures from the true faith, unless something is done to check the tide of skepticism and unbelief that threatens to sweep over our land.”

CHAPTER VI.

INTEREST AND INFLUENCE.

Prof. Ironsides returned to his home, and was soon sleeping the sleep of the just; but Dr. Goodway and his wife still sat in their chairs, their minds occupied with the conversation of the evening.

Mrs. Goodway was the first to speak: "*You* have no such fears for the future of Christianity as Prof. Ironsides, have you, Josiah?"

"I have too much faith in the divine wisdom and goodness to take such a gloomy view of the situation," he answered very thoughtfully; "but at the same time, I must recognize the fact that the foundations of our faith are being seriously assailed by the rationalism and materialism of the day. I have always regarded Education as the handmaid of Religion; but I can not help seeing that there is at least some tendency in all studies—especially in physical science—to lead the minds of young men away from spiritual things and make them more or less skeptical. Our responsibility is certainly very serious." And then the Doctor looked into her face, as if anxious for any advice or counsel she might have to give him.

"After a short pause, Mrs. Goodway said in a very serious tone: "Don't you think it would be an excellent thing for your students, religiously and otherwise, for you to admit young women to the College?"

Very great was the Doctor's surprise as he responded: "I never heard you speak in favor of co-education before,

Hannah; and I have always supposed, from your ideas of 'woman's sphere,' that you were opposed to it. What has occurred to change your mind or interest you in the subject?"

"I do not think you ever heard me say anything *directly* against it, did you?" she answered, with a little color; "but I will confess that my interest in the subject has been awakened by a talk I had only day before yesterday with Alice Carroll and Blanche Jordan, as I met them on the street."

Here the Doctor's face assumed a look of perfect astonishment, but he said nothing; and presently Mrs. Goodway continued: "Blanche has worked very hard the past two or three years, having had most of the care of the house on her hands since her mother's health failed; and yet in some way she has managed to keep up with her classes in the public school; and you know, Josiah, how much I have been attached to Alice, ever since she was a baby, and especially since her mother's death."

"Did they tell you they wanted to enter College?" asked the Doctor, a little playfully.

"Blanche didn't say a word herself," was the rather slow response; "and nearly all that Alice said was to express the wish that Beulah College would open its doors to young women as many other Colleges are doing. As I said to you, Blanche said nothing, but her looks showed very plainly how much she would like to take the College course if she could have the opportunity; and as soon as I left them, I resolved to speak to you about it at the first good opportunity."

Mrs. Goodway's voice by this time had become quite eloquent—although she knew it not!

"Did the girls see what an impression they made on you?" asked the Doctor, in the same playful tone.

"I don't suppose they did; but you know Alice always makes a strong impression on one's mind when she is interested in any subject; and I never saw her show more interest and enthusiasm in reference to anything than she did on this occasion. If I had been as much opposed to co-education as you seemed to think I was, *one look into her face*, as she spoke, would have changed my opinion—at least so far as she and Blanche are concerned."

"I confess," said the Doctor, in reply, "that I sympathize with any young woman who desires a collegiate education; but I have never yet come to a conclusion on the question whether co-education would be the wiser policy for our College. Some of the Trustees, I know, are opposed to it, while others are disposed to watch the experiment at other Colleges before taking any action upon it. But what makes you think such a change would have any effect upon the religious faith of the young men?"

Mrs. Goodway was at considerable loss for an answer to this; but, after some reflection, she slowly replied: "I do not know that it would have any influence upon their belief in the doctrines of the church; but, as women are more religious than men, it seems to me that the association with pious young women would make the young men more religious and less skeptical—at any rate" (speaking with more assurance in her tone) "it would have a good influence upon their moral characters."

"That might be the case, if all the girls who would enter the College were religious; but you would hardly expect that, Hannah?"

"Certainly not; but such girls as Alice and Blanche, so far as their influence might go, would certainly cause the boys to be more studious and also more religious."

"I believe," said the Doctor, "they claim that at

Oberlin and other Colleges where both sexes are admitted, the pupils are all more studious than either sex would be, if they were separated."

"Well," said Mrs. Goodway, very emphatically, "Alice Carroll ought to have the advantages of a collegiate education—and so ought Blanche Jordan."

"But all young women are not as capable of taking the course as they are, Hannah."

"Neither are all young men as talented and promising as Henry Elwood"—here Mrs. Goodway paused in in her discourse, as if she had a thought on her mind that she knew not how to express, but presently resumed in an undertone—"somehow, Josiah, for some time past, Alice's name has been associated in my mind with young Elwood's. He passed us while we were talking on the street; and although he only raised his hat and bowed, she immediately made some remark about the coming Commencement exercises, in a tone that clearly indicated her expectation of attending and the interest she felt in the addresses to be delivered."

"You surely have no basis for prophesying in this case, Hannah. Elwood has still to prepare himself for his profession, and I doubt whether he has even a speaking acquaintance with her."

"Alice told me she had met him only once; but I am certain he would greatly admire her, if he knew her as well as well as we do, Josiah, especially if she had the opportunity to take a collegiate course of study."

"As the Doctor made no answer to this, Mrs. Goodway very soon continued: "Josiah, I almost believe, that if Alice were permitted to go before the Trustees of the College and ask for admission to its privileges, they could not refuse her!"

Two or three weeks previous to the Commence-

ment exercises Elwood wrote the following letter to his mother :

BEULAH COLLEGE, June —, 187—.

My Dear Mother :

I hope you will not think me forgetful or ungrateful because of my delay in answering your very precious letter ; for if I ever appreciated all that you have done for me, it has been during the past few weeks, and especially since I received your letter.

Tell Mrs. Maloney that I only did what I ought to have done when I rescued Maggie from drowning last winter. I do not want her to feel under any special obligations to me.

Thanks to Miss Jenkins for her generous prophecies concerning my future. While I can not promise that they shall all be realized, I hope she will never be ashamed to confess that she was my teacher during so many of the years of my boyhood.

For several days previous to receiving your letter I had been engaged in preparing my Commencement oration. I at first thought I could set forth the superior advantages of the classical course in the most convincing terms : but as soon as my work was done I found it very unsatisfactory ; and all subsequent reflection has caused me to realize that all branches of study are only to be estimated as means of preparation for usefulness and service to others. I have been greatly aided in coming to this conclusion by a conversation I had with Supt. Carroll, of the Beulah public schools, and also by a lecture delivered to the students by Dr. Goodway, in which he showed that the true object of life consists in serving others without reference to any direct reward for ourselves.

All this has been a very severe exercise of mind to me, but I hope a valuable one. I shall make very little change in the title of my address ; but it will be very different from the one I first wrote. It will certainly be more modest in tone, and more becoming a young man of my age and experience.

Mother, I am fully persuaded that it is my duty to enter the Christian ministry, although I realize the great weight of its duties and responsibilities. Your letter had a very important influence in bringing me to this decision ; and two or three days later I received one from Mr. Edwards, which more fully confirmed me in my convictions as to my proper course. Please give him my thanks for his friendly interest and confidence, and tell him that I hope he will never be disappointed in me.

Dr. Goodway was very much rejoiced when I told him the decision I had made, and said he had the fullest confidence that

the Holy Spirit had directed my choice. He also expressed his firm belief that the Lord would bless my ministry and make it the means of great usefulness, if I proved faithful.

He spoke this last sentence in so serious a tone, that I quickly answered, "I hope I shall always be faithful, Dr. Goodway!"

He colored a little at this; but immediately continued, in the most cordial tone: "I did not speak thus, Elwood, from any lack of confidence in your integrity or your Christian character, but because I appreciate the great difficulties preachers will encounter for many years to come, and because I realize how much they will need divine grace to combat the evils of skepticism and worldliness, as well as the vice and immorality by which they are surrounded."

Prof. Ironsides called at our room a few nights since and had a talk with Vernon and me in reference to our future work. He is very much concerned about the doctrines of the church, and fears that both ministers and laymen are becoming "unsound." Although he addressed his remarks to both of us, I fancied I could see something in his looks and tone indicating that he was much more concerned about me than about Vernon—but I may have been mistaken in this opinion.

Two or three days afterward I had a second rather lengthy interview with Mr. Carroll, who, I forgot to tell you, is a member of the Episcopal church in Beulah, in which I asked him if he thought there was any danger of Christianity's losing its hold of the public mind, or of the people's becoming unbelievers in its doctrines.

He smiled as he answered: "I have no fears of that kind as long as the ministers of the various churches are equal to the demands of their office. Of course, there will be many nice points for them to decide in reference to what they believe, and also as to what they shall preach; but no doctrine that is true will suffer while men and women are honestly and seriously thinking about it! In fact," he added, "the truth that there is in all Christian doctrines"—I did not ask him just what he meant by this phrase—"will be made clearer and brighter, the more they are analyzed and examined—and studied *inductively*."

From which you can see that Mr. Carroll takes a much more encouraging view in reference to the future of Christianity and its doctrines than Prof. Ironsides does—is he not right?

From Your Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

P. S. As I am writing to my mother, I may mention the fact, that Mr. Carroll's daughter Alice was present during my two inter-

views with him and manifested the most lively interest in all that he said both in reference to education and to Christian doctrines—and although this is all the acquaintance I have had with her, whenever I think about our Commencement exercises, I can not help wondering whether she will be one of our audience.

H. E.

CHAPTER VII.

GRACE AND GRIT.

It was the Sunday preceding Commencement day at Beulah College; and the beautiful and commodious Presbyterian church was crowded with an audience of men and women desiring to hear the Baccalaureate sermon of Dr. Goodway.

Is there a public speaker beneath the sun whose soul is not inspired, in greater or less measure, by the *expectations* of his audience?

Much more (rather much less) than human must Dr. Goodway have been to have had no feeling of pride or self-consciousness in his breast as he sat upon the platform and looked out upon the sea of human faces before him.

And yet it was noticed that the most prominent expression upon his countenance was that of seriousness; although no one in the audience, except his wife, knew how much thought and anxiety and loss of sleep the preparation of his address had cost him.

What living preacher has not found his highest and best efforts to be the fruit of humiliation and self-sacrifice?

Was there not profound meaning in the prayer so often uttered by the itinerant preachers of our land: "Lord, let thy servant hide himself behind the cross as he preaches to-day!"

Doctor Goodway's delivery was pitched upon a key but little above the conversational tone, for the intense interest he felt in his students and his subject had brought

him to the feet of Nature ; and although he lacked many of the external gifts and graces of oratory, his singleness of desire and purpose triumphed over all obstacles and secured the closest attention of his entire audience.

The " oratorical " style of the most eloquent speakers must not claim our attention for too long a time ; the sweetest strains of the sweetest singers must charm us by their brevity ; but sympathetic conversation is the bread and water of life of which we never grow weary !

The preliminary services being concluded, to the surprise of every one, instead of announcing a text and displaying a roll of manuscript, he read from the first book of Samuel the account of the slaying of Goliath by the shepherd boy, David. The simple and earnest manner of his reading excited the lively interest of his hearers, and caused a vivid panorama of the event to pass before their mental vision. It was " an old, old story " to most of them ; but although there were present a large number of ministers and theologians as well as laymen versed in the Scriptures, they all listened as to a new narration.

After briefly describing the condition of the children of Israel and the seriousness of their situation in the presence of Goliath and the army of the Philistines, he pictured young David as offering to go forth *alone* to meet this terrible giant ; his laying aside the King's armor, not in a spirit of affectation or foolhardiness, but that he might have the more certain and effective use of his own powers ; his selection of his own weapons ; his running to meet his enemy ; his directness of aim at the giant's forehead ; and his complete triumph over one who had so long defied the armies of the Living God !

Then he proceeded to give a few words of earnest exhortation to the class, closing with this passage :

" My young friends, let me urge you to cherish and cultivate the spirit and valor of David ; for like him you

will have giants to fight both within and without; giants that stand directly before you and defy you to mortal combat. You must meet the giant of Selfishness, the giant of Intemperance, the giant of Avarice, the giant of Materialism, the giant of DOUBT, and many others whose name is legion. You may trust in the same God in whom David trusted; but you must also exercise your own strength, your own valor and your own skill. I would have you lean upon the divine arm for help; but I would also have your own arms stretched forth as David's were against his haughty and well-nigh invincible foe. Be full of divine grace, but also be full of human grit!"

"Were you not greatly surprised?" said Vernon to Elwood as they sat in their room in the afternoon. "Didn't you expect a longer and more learned discourse?"

"I was surprised both at the matter and manner of his address," Elwood responded; "but I have noticed for several weeks past that Dr. Goodway has been very much interested in our class, and has seemed to desire a more intimate acquaintance with us. I shall feel the influence of his sermon as long as I live."

"I hope, too," said Vernon, "it will have a good effect upon the skeptical and deistical members of our class and cause them to see how firm a basis our Christian faith rests upon. I don't see how any one can read this narrative without seeing how the Lord sustained David in this conflict and without believing in the truth of the Old Testament; and when we look at the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, what a firm foundation we have for the New Testament. And yet Dr. Goodway spoke of the giant of Doubt as one we would have to fight!"

"Perhaps," said Elwood, in response, "he had in mind the works of Renan, Strauss, Huxley and others,

that have caused so much doubt about everything of a miraculous nature."

Just then there was a rap at the door, and in response to a "Come in" from Elwood, Mark Conklin entered the room, with the usual interrogative expression upon his countenance.

"You have been discussing Dr. Goodway's sermon—eh?" he said, in his drollest tone, as he poised himself on a chair near the window and placed his feet on the window sill.

"Yes, we have," said Elwood; "and we would like very much to have your opinion of it—if possible."

"What if that little circumstance never happened?" he said, turning his bright eyes first to one and then the other. "Why didn't the learned Doctor establish the *fact* before making such a solemn appeal to us to follow David's example? What terrible giants does he suppose any of us will ever have to fight?"

"Of course," said Vernon, "we do not know what giants we will have to meet; but we must expect more or less conflict with the powers of evil; and I think the Doctor was anxious to prepare us for the struggle. The Bible speaks of the Christian life as a constant warfare; and perhaps the giants that we least expect"—was Vernon suddenly and unconsciously endued with the spirit of prophecy?—"are the very ones that will come in our way and defy us to mortal combat."

"*You* do not fear the giant of Doubt, of which the Doctor spoke, do you, Vernon?" asked his interrogator. "You would run to meet him without providing yourself with a sling and stones, wouldn't you?"

Vernon made no reply to this, except to shrug his shoulders and open a book lying near him on the table with manifest impatience; but Conklin seeing he had Elwood's ear, went on: "Shouldn't the Doctor have

advised us to read Don Quixote so as not to waste our time and breath in fighting windmills and other imaginary giants? And shouldn't he have told us what weapons we are to use in fighting that awful giant of Doubt?"

"What better weapons could any one ask than prayer and reading the Bible?" asked Vernon, slowly raising his eyes from the book he was trying to read.

"Prayer?" exclaimed Conklin. "Would you pray that you may not doubt something whether it be true or not? What fine progress the world would make in science and philosophy, if every one would turn out and fight the giant of Doubt with prayer and reading the Bible?"

Vernon made no answer to this, except a look of annoyance and weariness, and Elwood presently continued: "I don't believe that we should pray to be delivered from all doubt; but I do believe that our doubts should be controlled in some measure at least by our reason, and that we may pray to be led into the truth; and as to fighting the giants, isn't that what we have to do every day? What have we been doing here in College the last four years but fighting the giant of Ignorance?"

"And what victories have any of us to report to date?" asked Conklin. "How much wiser are we than when we began our course? Won't we all have to unlearn the little we have learned while here before we can enter upon practical life—if we ever do enter upon it?" he added with a twinkle. "Why should we be so valiant anyhow? Are not most of the 'giants' in our way inere ghosts that will vanish just as soon as we pay no attention to them? And as to the real giants, if there are any such, wouldn't it be well to remember that 'discretion is the better part of valor,' and keep well out of their way? Suppose David had missed Goliath's forehead and been trampled under his feet—would Dr. Goodway have

sounded the young man's praises so loudly and held him before us as a shining example?"

All these questions were uttered in a very slow manner, and with a pause of a minute or two at the end of each one.

When he was through, Elwood responded: "But he didn't miss his aim; and the very lesson the Doctor urged upon us was that we should fight skillfully as well as bravely. You must admit, Conklin, that life is largely made up of contest and conflict. What an amount of struggling mankind have to go through in order to overcome hunger and cold and disease and secure even a comfortable physical existence."

"And what glorious success they are having, especially in our large cities,' why don't you add?" was the response. "Say, Elwood," he continued after a pause of a few moments, "how long will it take at the present rate of progress to usher in the glorious 'Millennium' that the preachers and reformers have so much to say about? And when the people are all converted to Christianity and have all their wants supplied, will they be happier than they now are?"

Can Henry Elwood enjoy the spice and flavor of Conklin's interminable queries and yet hold fast to the reality of the Christian faith and the worth of human life?

Certainly, Conklin is having no influence on Vernon—of which the latter is conscious!

At the hour the above conversation was in progress in Elwood and Vernon's room, Mrs. Goodway was bestowing on her husband her warmest approval of his Baccalaureate and assuring him that it was very acceptable to all his auditors.

"I could see," she said to him, "that the graduating class listened to you very intently, and I don't believe they will ever forget it."

"I actually trembled when I first began to speak," he answered; "but I soon saw that the boys were very much interested; and their attention was so inspiring that I hardly thought of anything but the message I wanted to give them."

"And did you notice how interested Alice Carroll and Blanche Jordan were?"

A look of peculiar surprise was Dr. Goodway's answer to this inquiry; and then Mrs. Goodway proceeded: "But they sat so far back, that perhaps you didn't observe whether they were listening to you or not. But, if you had noticed Alice's face while you were speaking, you wouldn't be surprised at my question. Blanche was interested, too, but she didn't show it in her face like Alice."

The Doctor colored slightly, but quickly answered: "Yes, Hannah, I did notice Alice's interest very soon after I began to speak, and it continued to increase to the end of my discourse. She seemed to have such a clear appreciation of my subject and of everything I said. I almost thought she comprehended my ideas more clearly than I did myself." [Know you not, O, Dr. Goodway, that Heaven often gives the opposite sex this highest, divinest faculty?]

"You couldn't refuse *your* consent to her admission to the College, could you, Josiah?" she asked very pleasantly, but seriously.

"Well, well, we will wait till the question comes before us anyhow!" he answered.

"I wish very much, that Henry Elwood would get well acquainted with her before he graduates and leaves Beulah!" she said, with considerable emphasis in her tone.

CHAPTER VIII.

MYSTERIES AND MISERIES.

Elwood's "Valedictory Oration" was, as he promised his mother it would be, "more modest in tone" than the one he first prepared; but it revealed what the first one did not, a considerable *reserve* of moral and intellectual force in its author. His clearness of utterance secured the closest attention of his audience—among whom he did not fail to notice Mr. Carroll and Alice—and at the close of the exercises he received the warmest congratulations of his friends and acquaintances.

It could not be expected that a young man of twenty-two would indulge no self-consciousness whatever upon such an occasion; but Elwood was, at least, comparatively free from it; and if ever a College graduate returned to his home fully charged with a sense of duty and responsibility, it was he.

On Christmas day following he wrote to his mother:

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, }
NEW YORK, Dec. 25, 187-. }

My Dear Mother:

I must improve the leisure I have to-day to answer the letter I received from you a few days ago.

I was very glad to have you write so much about the people in Arcadia. It almost seems to me that I never got acquainted with any of them, until I went home last summer after graduating. How friendly they all seemed, and what a generous and hearty interest they all manifested in my future success! If I ever felt vain or "stuck up" because I was a College student, I was certainly ashamed of it while I was at home.

I was not much surprised to hear of Frank Newcomb's death, as I did not expect he would live through the winter when I left home. The last thing he said to me was, "How I wish I could live to hear you preach, Henry!"

You are, no doubt, anxious to know all about my life in the Seminary and New York city, and especially will you desire to know what progress I am making in the high mysteries of theological study. The methods of study and recitation are very different from those in Beulah College; but I have had very little difficulty in getting used to them. In teaching the Evidences of Christianity they do not lay as much stress on Miracles and Prophecies as Prof. Ironsides used to do; neither do they appear to be "alarmed" as he was about the coming influence of German Rationalism in America. I have even heard the prediction made, that when this Rationalism, or Higher Criticism of the Bible, does reach this country, the first place in the Presbyterian church to be seriously affected by it will be Union Seminary!

I have gone to hear quite a number of the leading preachers of New York, but I generally attend Mr. Beecher's church in Brooklyn. I remember that Prof. Ironsides used to condemn his theology as "unsound," and Dr. Goodway did not have full confidence in his orthodoxy; but I do not see how any one can listen to his preaching, as I have done, without believing in Christianity more and more.

I have become very much interested in Robertson's Sermons since I came here, and have also read his "Life and Letters." What a terribly severe struggle he had while he was undergoing his change of theological views. I wonder whether I will ever have such an experience after I enter upon the ministry!

Vernon's room is close to mine, and we spend a good deal of time together. For some weeks past he has been intently studying the Evidences of Christianity, and has read Paley, Hopkins, Alexander, and several other authors, whose works on the subject are in the Seminary library. I first thought that he was seeking to equip himself with the most thorough and effective arguments for the content that every minister must expect to have with skepticism and infidelity; but I now begin to fear that his own mind is disturbed on the subject, and that he is only anxious to have it settled. He has dropped a good many remarks to me indicating that he is much worried over the objections to miracles that have been urged by Hume and others in the past, and also over those presented by many of the scientists and philosophers of the present day; and he has sat up a great many nights reading the various arguments in reply to Hume. So interested has he become in this sub-

ject, that he doesn't give much attention to his other work, and has lost nearly all his interest in the ministry as a profession. What makes the matter seem so strange to me, is, that he has always been so positive and decided in his religious convictions, and has felt so certain that it was his duty to preach. He has heretofore declined to go with me to Mr. Beecher's church, but has agreed to do so next Sunday.

A great many of the students are engaged in the Mission Sunday Schools in different parts of the city. It is certainly an excellent means of preparation for our future work; and O, how much need there is of our most earnest efforts to carry the truths of the gospel to the poor and degraded inhabitants of New York!

How different life seems here from every thing I have seen or experienced before. Here are all classes of people, from the richest to the poorest, from the most intelligent to the most ignorant, from the purest and noblest to the most degraded. Immigrants are constantly coming in from all parts of the globe, so that the population is increasing very rapidly. From the upper rooms in our Seminary buildings I can look out upon the dwellings of well-nigh a million people, comprising representatives of every race and nation of the earth. All the world is here, mother!

And O, what a difference—what an *infinite* difference I might almost say—in the condition of these various classes of people—such wealth, such abundance, such luxury on the one hand, and on the other, such abject poverty, such utter wretchedness, such hopeless misery! How can I help asking myself, whether, after all, Christianity has made such progress as we claim for it? I have heard it said, and I fear it is true, that a worse than Irish famine prevails in New York *all the time*, and that a large number of men, women and children die in the city every year from lack of sufficient food, if they are not starved outright! I often wonder why God permits such suffering and destitution to exist by the side of such great abundance; but every body here seems to take it as a matter of course; and although there are numerous charities in active operation in the city, the *gulf* between the rich and the poor seems to be growing wider and deeper continually—at any rate there is no diminution of the wide-spread poverty and degradation. Perhaps if I were to live in the city for any length of time, I would become entirely accustomed to this condition of the “submerged” inhabitants; but, at present, it affects my feelings very painfully, making me sometimes ask whether there is really an All-wise Providence, and whether my theological studies are not all for nought—but I will not let such thoughts as these take possession of my mind.

The city is so full of saloons and brothels and other agencies of evil, that one might well be surprised that there is no more crime than there is. I often wonder how God will judge these poor creatures, who have been surrounded with evil influences all their lives, and whether they will certainly have to suffer "eternal torments" for the sins they have committed.

Most of all, I pity the little children who are born and reared in such an atmosphere and with such an "environment." How hopeless, how helpless, how wretched seem their young lives! What hardness, what neglect, what abuse they suffer—and who is there to hear their cry!

I asked one of our Professors the other day, if he had any hope that there would ever be a change in the condition of the poorer classes living in the city; but he only shook his head and replied: "I fear you might as well try to *arrest the law of gravitation* as try to 'abolish poverty' in New York, especially while so many foreigners are coming in every year!"

His remark seemed un-Christian to me at first; but what could he do for all these people, even if he cared for them a thousand fold more than he does?

But while I am nearly overwhelmed by all that I see on the dark side of New York life, on the other side, what noble business enterprises, what triumphs of art and architecture, what educational privileges, what grace and elegance and refinement are to be seen in this great metropolis!

The hundreds of churches in the city do certainly contain many devout and faithful worshipers—people who have consecrated at least a portion of their wealth to the service of Christ;—and I trust the ministers are all trying to fulfill the divine command to preach the gospel to every creature; but how few of the people ever see their faces or hear their message!"

I have prayed most earnestly that I might be able to reap all the advantages of theological study at Union Seminary and in this commercial center of the nation, without being overwhelmed by the many problems that rise up before me, and without losing faith in the Providence of God and in the wisdom and virtue of the American people.

Yes, mother, "Darkest New York" is indeed very dark; but I trust that the Sun of Righteousness will yet shine upon it with life and healing in his beams! Your Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

CHAPTER IX.

INSPIRATION AND INTERROGATION.

On the Sunday between Christmas and New Year's, Elwood and Vernon attended Plymouth church, and heard a sermon from Mr. Beecher, in which, although he did not assume to discuss the "Evidences of Christianity," either internal or external, the adaptation of the truths of the Bible to the wants of human nature and the life-giving power of the teachings of Christ were set forth with all the wealth of imagery and illustration, for which the distinguished orator was so noted..

They both listened intently, but with very different feelings. Elwood was charmed, delighted, captivated; Vernon was puzzled and worried.

Perhaps Elwood was not aware—he certainly would not have acknowledged—how much his interest in the discourse was heightened by noticing in the opposite gallery Mr. Carroll and Alice, who were spending the holidays with some friends in the city.

No; he would not have not confessed, even to his own consciousness, that the eloquence of the great preacher became more eloquent [to him] when reflected from the face of this girl with whom he had so limited an acquaintance—but such was the fact!

At the close of the services they met at the door of the church, where Vernon was introduced to Mr. Carroll and Alice; and there naturally followed expressions of appreciation concerning the sermon.

"I have heard Mr. Beecher several times," said Mr. Carroll, "and every time his eloquence surprises me—he always seems to surpass himself!"

"I don't see how any one could preach more eloquently," said Elwood; "and don't you think his oratory is as near *perfection* as any thing under the sun can be?"

"No one has ever found any defects in it, so far as I know, or suggested any improvement!" responded Mr. Carroll.

"I certainly never heard any preacher equal to him," said Vernon, with a lack of enthusiasm in his tone that caused a look of mingled surprise and inquiry on Elwood's part.

"What a privilege you young men have to hear such preaching every Sunday!" said Alice, with unconscious animation.

Why was her countenance so expressive and her voice so thrilling to Elwood? Was she not speaking to Vernon as well as to him?

But a much greater surprise than meeting Mr. Carroll and Alice awaited the two young men on their way back to the Seminary. As they were walking up Madison Avenue, they unexpectedly came face to face with Mark Conklin!

It was a mutual surprise; for there had been no communication between them since their graduation six months before. A vigorous hand-shaking followed, especially between Conklin and Elwood; and after a few inquiries about each other's experience since leaving College, Conklin insisted, that before they returned to the Seminary, they should take dinner with him at the ——— Hotel, a few squares distant, where he had taken quarters a few days before.

The invitation could not be refused, although Ver-

non's response was not as reluctant as Conklin expected it would be.

"Both studying theology?—going to be Christian ministers?" said the irrepressible quizzer, as soon as they were seated in his room, awaiting the call to dine. "Do you think I had better tarry in the city and take a course with you?"

No immediate answer being made to these sallies, he presently continued: "Are your Profs. at the Seminary all as 'sound' and 'orthodox' as old Ironsides? Lord, what fun I used to have with him when we were studying—perhaps I should say when we were reciting, that is, when the rest of the class were reciting—the Evidences of Christianity! Do they teach the same 'Evidences' at Union Seminary that they did at Beulah, or have they taken up with the 'New Theology' and the 'Higher Criticism,' that Prof. Ironsides used to worry so much about?"

Conklin looked at Vernon and saw something more than annoyance in his face—he was *interested* as well as annoyed. After a few minutes' silence he spoke, but how different was his tone from that of former days!

"The foundations of Christianity are always the same, but they are giving more attention to the internal evidences than to the external ones"—and then he looked at Conklin as if he would really like to have his opinion concerning the true basis of the Christian faith!

"Then they're not so certain about the miracles and prophecies as Ironsides was?" asked the latter, after a short pause, and in the driest possible tone.

"Is there anything more mysterious about the miracles of the Bible than about the operations of Nature that we see every day?" asked Elwood. "We can not understand how a plant or a tree grows, or how our physical life is sustained."

"Why don't you clinch that point," responded Conklin, "by quoting the text, 'Great is the mystery, etc.'? What fine progress you are making in theological dialectics! Have you got far enough along to reconcile all the statements of the Bible with the revelations of science? Can you prove to the satisfaction of every reasonable mind, that Moses (or whoever wrote the Pentateuch) meant six geological periods when he said the world was created in six days—only six thousand years ago!"

What effect such queries would have on a young man like Vernon, who had spent many days and nights in searching for *certain* proof of all the miracles recorded in the Bible, may be very easily imagined!

"But, Conklin," said Elwood, "the theologians are not giving as much attention to these discrepancies as they used to do, because they are resting the claims of Christianity on the great triumphs it has won, and on the excellence of its principles and their adaptation to all classes and conditions of mankind."

"And don't you think," was the reply, "that your Professors ought to take you a journey round the world to show you how many nations have been Christianized and made happy, all in the brief space of eighteen or nineteen centuries!"

"You must admit, Conklin," said Elwood, with some earnestness, "that the establishment of the American government and the civilization of the nineteenth century are largely, if not wholly, due to Christianity."

"And to make you appreciate this glorious 'civilization' more fully, wouldn't it be a capital idea for you to go through all the slums and dives and tenement houses of New York, just for an 'object lesson?' You know how valuable 'object lessons' are in the instruction of youth!"

"I frankly confess," answered Elwood, "that there is a mystery about these things, a mystery that I have tried

in vain to understand ; but I still believe that Christianity is the only hope of civilization and humanity." Bad as things are, would they not be far worse, if it were not for the influence of our holy religion ? "

" And while they are at it," continued Conklin, not heeding Elwood's point, " ought they not to take you through the palaces of the rich—I mean such of them as poor devils of theological students would be allowed to enter—so you could see how much influence your religion has had upon these people ! How long would it take you to cipher out the problem, whether the ' upper classes,' or the ' lower classes,' have received the greater benefit from Christianity ! "

Let no one be surprised that neither Elwood nor Vernon could more successfully parry these thrusts. There be many " Evidences " of Christianity not found in the books, nor yet in the consciousness of many young men of their years ; and whoever would show that his religion is divine must reflect its light into the souls of his fellow-men ! 7

The apple proves its virtue by its flavor ; the flower by its fragrance ; the fire by its heat ; the sun by its shining !

CHAPTER X.

DOUBT AND DARKNESS.

It was less than a fortnight after this, that Vernon came to Elwood's room at a late hour one evening, with a much more serious expression of countenance than even the most serious theological students are wont to assume.

"What ails you, Homer?" asked Elwood, a little playfully. "Not getting homesick? No bad news from ——" but a second view of Vernon's face checked him; and the two friends looked at each other for a minute or two, without moving or speaking.

Vernon sat down, and presently answered very slowly and seriously: "No, Henry, I am not homesick; neither have I received bad news from any quarter; but I have determined to give up the study of theology."

"Elwood's surprise was beyond all power of expression; but there was no mistaking the tone of Vernon's voice. ; so he could only say to him: "Are you really in earnest, Vernon? Have you concluded that you are not called to preach, or that you would be more useful in some other profession?"

"As Elwood said this, he watched Vernon very closely for some sign or token that his feeling was only a temporary one, only such a misgiving as any theological student might be supposed to have when not in his best mood. But there was no relaxation in the lines of Vernon's face; on the contrary, his lips were compressed more firmly, and his entire bearing indicated that his determina-

tion was final. He made no response, however ; and presently Elwood continued : " I can not account for this, Vernon ; it has never once occurred to me that you would give up the ministry for any other profession ; and I have always felt so certain that you were called to preach."

Vernon could not conceal the pain that Elwood's words gave him, but he still remained silent ; and for a few minutes they could only cast inquiring glances at each other.

Poor Vernon ! He was not troubled because the path of Duty had become too steep and rugged, but because her face was muffled, and her voice could no longer be heard !

When at length he spoke, it was in words like these : " Elwood, I can stand it no longer. I have been studying these ' Evidences ' day after day and night after night for several weeks ; and is no use for me to spend any more time upon them. I began this study, thinking it was the easiest thing in the world to prove the miracles of the Bible, and that any person who denied them must be either very wicked or very dull of understanding ; and I determined to read and digest all the arguments I could find, so that I could convince every skeptic and unbeliever of his error, even if he were as much disposed to cavil as Conklin, and also show all Christians how certain a basis they have for their faith : but before I had gone very far, I found myself troubled with many questions that I could not answer, and for several weeks I have been searching for arguments sufficient to settle my own doubts ! "

" And have not found them ? "

" I must confess," said Vernon--and here his tone became much sadder than before--" that the longer I studied the more my doubts increased. I tried to shake them off, but they only seemed to cling to me the more closely. I prayed the Lord to save me from unbelief, but my unbelief would not leave me."

“But you surely do not think that miracles are *impossible*—you would not limit the power of the Almighty?” asked Elwood, quite earnestly.

“All I can say about that,” was the doleful reply, “is, that all the arguments in favor of the miracles of the Bible that I have read are not sufficient to prove them beyond doubt or question; and that is the way I must believe them, if I believe them at all. And surely no man has a right to enter the Christian ministry, who does not believe in miracles as firmly as he believes in his own existence. I don’t even see how any one can call himself a Christian, unless he implicitly accepts every thing recorded in the Bible. I know there are other proofs of Christianity besides the miracles, but these are the corner-stone; and how can the house stand when its corner-stone is removed?”

“You have not accepted Hume’s statement that ‘no testimony can prove a miracle,’ have you?” asked Elwood.

“At one time,” was the doleful answer, “while studying the many able and learned replies to Hume and to the scientists and philosophers of our own day, I was *almost* convinced that there was sufficient evidence to satisfy every reasonable person that the miracles were actually wrought. I went to bed rejoicing in this light; but when I awoke in the morning there came to me the torturing question, how even the working of miracles could prove the writers of the Bible to be above all error and all possibility of error. And this question is harder to dispose of than any that has yet come into my mind. I have found no answer to it in any of the books I have read, and none in the lectures of our Professors!”

“But the *internal* evidences, Vernon; are they not sufficient, even without the miracles and prophecies?”

“They certainly are not sufficient to satisfy me that the Bible possesses the absolute authority that is claimed

for it; and how can any one ask his fellow-men to accept it as a revelation from heaven, when he has no solid basis on which to rest its claims? Without such a basis as men can see and understand, they will not and can not acknowledge the binding obligation of Christianity. I certainly can not preach it to them without such a foundation for my own faith."

Ah, Vernon, have you never read the words of the Christ, "*Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed!*" 7

"Have you chosen any other profession, Vernon?" asked Elwood, seeing that all efforts to persuade his friend to continue his theological studies would be in vain.

"I have decided to enter the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and will commence the study of medicine right away," responded Vernon; and then, with a little more cheerfulness in his tone, : "A man does not have to believe in miracles to enter the medical profession!"

There was silence between them for a few minutes, after which Elwood said very kindly: "What will your father and mother say to this change, Homer? Have you written to them about it?"

In attempting to reply to this, Vernon's voice choked, and his eyes filled with tears, but, after a short struggle, he said: "I know it will be a great disappointment to them; but I have often heard my father say that no man ought to be a minister of any church unless he is a firm believer in all its doctrines; and I am certain he would not approve my entering the Presbyterian ministry with such doubts as I have about the miracles of the Bible; but O, how it will pain him"—here Vernon's voice failed him for a minute or two—"to see me classed with skeptics and unbelievers. My mother's heart was very much set on my becoming a minister; and it will grieve her sorely to have me deny anything in the Bible, but she always taught me

to be true and honest; and and I am certain they would both rather see me give up the ministry than act the part of a base hypocrite! I would much rather be an *infidel* than act such a part!"

"You surely do not expect to become an infidel!" exclaimed Elwood, very anxiously.

"I suppose that is what I shall be called," was the rather pitiful answer; "but I will not be dishonest or hypocritical, even to escape that epithet."

Another pause, during which Vernon seemed to be undergoing the severest torture; and, at length, he broke out in a sobbing voice: "O, Henry, what shall I write to Clara Martin?"

Yes; what shall he write to the minister's daughter, the girl who given him her affection and her plighted troth in the days of his College life, when his faith was unshaken, and the service of Christ was a loadstar ever before his eyes; the girl with whom he had spent so many blissful hours in contemplation of the time when he should preach that Gospel, to which she had devoted her life, and concerning whose truthfulness no shadow of doubt had ever crossed her mind; the girl who, he knew, would gladly follow him to the ends of the earth, that she might assist him in the functions of the office to which she believed he was divinely called;—now that the foundations of his faith are gone, and he himself knows not by what name he should be called, what *shall* he write to her?

Vernon was nearly overcome with his own question. His frame shook with feeling, and hot and bitter tears fell from his eyes. He rose from his chair, and throwing his arms around Elwood's neck, sobbed out, "O Henry, this is too much! Will I, indeed, have to give her up?"

Elwood's eyes glistened with sincerest sympathy; but, as he thought of Clara and her family and all her religious

associations, he realized how serious Vernon's case in reference to her might be, so he could only say: "Homer, I can not tell how Miss Martin will regard this change in your belief concerning the miracles of the Bible. She loves you very ardently; but she is intensely religious, and has a very strong sense of duty; and therefore your only course is to be perfectly frank and candid with her, whatever pain it may cost you. Perhaps"—assuming a more encouraging tone—"you could explain every thing to her, and ask her to wait until——"

"No," interrupted Vernon; "*I can never believe in miracles again.* I will tell her all, and say that I will submit to whatever course her conscience directs her to take—but, O God, I never dreamed it would come to this!"

CHAPTER XI.

DUTY AND DEVOTION.

"Father, I want very much to go to College after I graduate at the public school," said Alice Carroll, as she entered her father's library and laid her hand on his shoulder one evening a few weeks after their return from the east.

"Well, Alice, I sympathize with your desire," was his quick response, "and much as I should regret to have you leave home, my daughter shall not be refused any educational privileges on which her heart is set. Where would you like to go? There are a great many Female Colleges and Seminaries, besides a number of institutions where both sexes are admitted—but you will have time enough to think about that between this and next fall."

"But, father, I would like to go to College without leaving home!" she responded, after a moment's hesitation.

"If Beulah College would admit both sexes, you could have that opportunity, Alice; but I fear you would have to wait a great many more years than you would wish, before its doors are open to young women—if, indeed, they will ever be open," he added, with a smile.

"Father, I have something to talk to you about this evening"—she spoke with a slight trepidation of tone, but her eyes never before looked so clear and bright—"you will give me a gracious hearing, will you not?"

"Very well, Alice."

"Nearly a year ago, just a few weeks before the last

Commencement, as Blanche Jordan and I were expressing to each other the desire to take a collegiate course, we met Mrs. Goodway on the street; and I asked her if she thought Beulah College would ever admit young women to its privileges; and nearly every time I have seen her since, she speaks about it, and tells me how much the Doctor is interested in the subject. She says he is giving it very serious consideration, and she thinks, if he sees his way clear, he will bring it before the Trustees at their next annual meeting. She has urged me to get some of the girls living in Beulah to sign a petition for admission to the College and place it in the Doctor's hands, as that would at least give him the opportunity to present the matter to the Trustees. I have talked to Blanche and several other girls in the High School about it, and also to Clara Martin and a few other graduates of previous years; and nearly all of them—especially Blanche and Clara—are anxious to sign such a petition; but they wanted me to see what you thought about it first."

"The Trustees will surely not refuse you the 'right of petition,' Alice!" he said, with a smile.

"Then you don't think there would be anything *improper* in our taking the course that Mrs. Goodway suggested?" she asked, with some eagerness.

"I certainly see no objection to your doing what you propose, except that it will not be likely to have any effect upon the Trustees of the College"—then pausing a moment or two—"still, I remember that a few days ago, in a conversation with Dr. Goodway, he asked my views of co-education——"

"You told him you were in favor of it?" she interrupted.

"Yes, Alice; and I also said that I had always found the association of the sexes so desirable in public schools, that I believed it should be adopted by Colleges also. I

didn't suppose he was seriously considering the subject, (neither did I know that *you* were so interested in it), or I might have said more to him than I did."

"Still you don't think the Trustees would be influenced by our desire to take the collegiate course?"

"I really could not give you much encouragement on that point, Alice. The Presbyterian church is a very 'conservative' institution, and a few of its most 'conservative' members belong to this Board of Trustees. Large bodies, like Colleges, always move slowly. Prof. Ironsides would certainly oppose it, unless he could be convinced that St. Paul's various injunctions in reference to women were not intended to exclude them from American Colleges; and, possibly, there are other members of the Faculty of the same mind. But, at all events, a modest petition from a number of young women would do no harm; and, if Dr. Goodway is as seriously studying the question as I now suspect he is, he will certainly come to a favorable conclusion upon it, and he might influence the Trustees to adopt the policy of co-education. I speak of this as a possibility, because I know the Trustees have the highest confidence in Dr. Goodway's wisdom and judgment as well as in his devotion to the interests of the College."

It was just a week after this, that Alice called at Clara Martin's home to report the very gracious manner in which Dr. Goodway had received the petition for admission to Beulah College, that herself and other young women had presented to him, Clara having excused herself from accompanying her companions to the Doctor's house.

"O Clara," she said, with eyes full of enthusiasm, "I can hardly tell you how surprised we were. We almost feared the Doctor would rebuke us for impertinence, or, at best, dismiss us without any promise or encouragement; but, instead of that, he shook hands with each of us, and

told us he had been thinking a great deal upon the subject lately, and had almost concluded that Beulah College ought to open its doors to young women as well as to young men. He thought the matter would come before the Trustees next Commencement, and he believed they would give it very careful, and he hoped, favorable consideration—but, Clara, what makes you look so sad? You haven't been sick?"

"No Alice," replied Clara, with eyes full of tears, which, till this moment, she had restrained with great effort—"I have not been sick, and I ought to rejoice with you over Dr. Goodway's kind reception of our petition; but, O Alice"—here the suffering girl laid her head on her friend's shoulder—"how much I have suffered the past few days—what shall I do?—what shall I do?"

Alice quickly divined—have not the woes of love a *tone* that belongs to no other utterance?—that Clara's grief was in some way related to her engagement with Homer Vernon; but whatever curiosity she felt was thoughtfully restrained; and she wiped Clara's tears from her face without asking any questions.

This delicate sympathy was highly prized by Clara; and, after a few minutes, she raised her head and looked into her friend's face very gratefully—and pitifully.

There was a responsive tear in Alice's eye, but she waited for Clara to speak.

"Dear Alice," the latter at length faltered, "I thought I would say nothing about this to any one, except my father and mother, but now I feel that I must tell you too. Homer Vernon"—but sobs choked her utterance, and again she laid her head on Alice's shoulder and wept profusely.

After some time Alice spoke with exquisite sympathy and tenderness: "Clara, I can not understand your trouble. I never met Mr. Vernon until father and I were

in Brooklyn during the holidays; but I have heard him spoken of as a very worthy and pious young man, and I do not see how he could prove false to you, or deceive you in any way."

"Yes, Alice," was the reply, "he was very religious, at least, I always thought so; and he always said he would prize me as a wife, because I was so devoted to religious duties, and could be such a help and comfort to him when he became a minister. And I always told him, that it would be very hard for me to leave the Methodist church, to which I was so much attached, but if I could assist him in his ministry, for his sake and Christ's sake, I would cheerfully make the sacrifice."

Here Clara paused, quite overcome with the weight of her feelings, while Alice looked into her face with mingled sympathy and curiosity.

Accepting this unspoken request to tell every thing, the poor girl continued: "He has written to me, that he no longer believes in the miracles of the Bible, and has therefore lost faith in Christianity as a revelation from heaven, and as he fears I will not want to marry a man that will be called an *infidel*, he will release me from my engagement, if I so desire. He says it is exceedingly painful to him to write this to me, but he feels bound to do it."

Alice listened very attentively, and, after a few moments' pause, said: "I am very glad to learn, Clara, that Mr. Vernon has not proved false to you in any respect; and, from what you say, he suffers as much as you do."

"That only makes my duty the more painful," was the sad reply. "O, how *can* he doubt the truth of every thing written in the Bible? It seems so awful, Alice!"

"He has written to you very frankly and honorably, Clara. Must you immediately decide either to break your

engagement, or to cling to him in spite of his disbelief in Christianity? Could you not ask him to give you time——”

“No, Alice,” was the prompt reply; “I will not leave the matter in suspense. Neither of us could endure that. It will be very hard for me to give him up; but I have often heard my father say that when duty requires us to take any course, we should promptly decide to take it, no matter how much we may suffer. My parents have not yet told me what they think I ought to do; but I feel certain they never could bear to see me marry an infidel, and I fear Homer has really become one—but I shall never cease to pray for the salvation of his soul! I can not see why I have to suffer so. Am I such a great sinner, that I must be chastened so grievously?”

“‘Whom the Lord LOVETH he chasteneth,’ Clara,” was Alice’s quick and kindly answer—and, after a few minutes’ pause, she continued: “Whatever be the result of this trial, I feel certain that he is preparing you for his service. He will never forsake you!”

“I hope I shall never lose faith in his goodness,” replied Clara very gratefully; “but O, it will be so hard for me to write my last letter to Homer Vernon!”

Most gladly would Alice have done something to prevent Clara’s separation from Vernon; but the *chasm* that had opened between the young lovers was too wide for her vision—she could not see across it!

CHAPTER XII.

FATE AND FAITH.

One night in March following Vernon's withdrawal from Union Seminary, he and Elwood were walking arm in arm along one of the most crowded and squalid streets of New York.

There was nothing *unusual* to arrest their attention. A newspaper reporter with the most eager scent for news would perhaps have traveled the full length of the thoroughfare without finding a single "item;" and the uniformed policemen trod their beats with as regular steps and as imperturbable faces, as if there were not a human being within the range of their vision. But Homer Vernon's spirit was sore and exquisitely sensitive; and in a walk of half a mile he saw and heard enough to fill a volume. Every unwashed street gamin; every ragged and shivering beggar girl; every feeble and tottering old man; every withered, decrepit and palsied woman; every reeling drunkard, whether male or female; every brazen street-walker; every haggard and despairing face, arrested his attention and seemed to demand his intensest thought and feeling: while the cries of little children and the curses of men and women, mingled with the din and clatter of the street, pierced the depths of his consciousness.

It was only the usual carnival of poverty and vice on *one* of the dark highways of the great city—why should he be in any wise affected by it?

Vernon had commenced the study of medicine with a

distinguished physician of the city, preparatory to a full course of lectures and other instruction in the College of Physicians and Surgeons; but neither his change of profession nor his change of theological views had abated the friendship between him and Elwood. On the contrary, this separation of their paths seemed to increase their interest in each other's society; and whenever they met, this interest generally manifested itself in walks about the city or in conversation upon subjects pertaining to its inhabitants.

On this occasion Elwood was on his way to look after a boy belonging to a down town Mission Sunday School, Harry Howard by name, in whom he was much interested, and who had been absent from the school for the past two Sundays; and Dr. ——'s office being along his route, he stopped and asked Vernon to accompany him.

After crossing Broadway a very short walk eastward brought them to the street parallel to Broadway, along which Vernon experienced the sensations and feelings above described—if such sensations and feelings can be described in human language. At length they turned eastward again, and after walking a square or two toward East river, they came to the block in which Mrs. Howard, Harry's mother, lived.

It was an old, four-story structure, and her room was on the fourth floor. After ascending three flights of stairs and passing to the rear end of a dark hallway, Elwood knocked at the door, and a thin-faced woman of middle age and rather slender form presently opened it. She was too much surprised to bid them come in, and could only look at them in utter astonishment and bewilderment.

Elwood noticed her embarrassment and quietly said to her, "I came to inquire after Harry, Mrs. Howard; we have missed him from the school the last two Sundays, and I feared he might be sick."

"O, yes, sir, come in; he has been very sick," was

the answer, "but he is some better to-day—he will be very glad to see you."

They both went in and closed the door. Very scant was the "furniture" in that room—a small cook stove nearly worn out, one table, two or three shelves for a cupboard, two wash-tubs, a store box for a coal-bin (but by no means filled with coal), one bedstead and bedding, three or four chairs, a meagre supply of tinware and dishes, not much more than a dozen pieces all told, no articles "too tedious to mention" to be added to the list. The woman's dress was rather ragged, and the room was very far from being clean or tidy; and yet if these young men had been much keener observers, they would have noticed something in her speech and manner to indicate that she had seen better days; they would have observed some traces of the grace and refinement which several years of hard fate had not entirely obliterated.

A hasty and unfortunate marriage, a drunken husband, now dead, work too hard for her delicate constitution, sickness, neglect, abuse—these were some of the chapters of the experience which had reduced Dora Howard from a position of comparative comfort to the poverty and squalor in which we now find her.

"Here is Harry," she said, moving toward the bed on which the little fellow, a lad of ten years, was lying half asleep. Then with a faint smile on her face, she said to him, "Harry, here is Mr. Elwood come to see you."

The little boy opened his eyes with a look of pleasure, and Elwood's hand was laid on his head as he said, "We missed you from Sunday School, Harry; and I was afraid you were sick, so I came around to see you."

"I'm better now," was the child's reply, "and I'll be there next Sunday."

"O, Mr. Elwood," the mother here broke in, "Harry has been very sick, and I was so afraid he would die. I

don't see what I would do without my Harry. He is such a good boy to do all the chores he can and brings me all the pennies he earns, much as I know he would love a bit of candy or a few peanuts sometimes; and then he's so good to stay with his brother and sister"—here Mrs. Howard pointed with a slight flush of pride to a girl of three years and a boy of two crouching in the farther corner of the room—"when I go out to work. But I don't know what I would have done since he has been sick, if some good women hadn't brought us so many good things to eat and ordered a few bushels of coal; but I gave a part of the things to Mrs. Lewis, who lives on the floor below us, because she has so many little children and her husband was out of work, and they had nothing to eat, and no fire, although the weather has been very cold."

"But, mamma," said Harry, in a feeble voice, for, although the fever had left him, he was still very weak, "my teacher says the Lord will always provide for us, if we trust in him; and the last time I was at Sunday School we had a lesson which told how the ravens fed Elijah because he was so good a man."

"Yes, Harry, he has provided for us; but I am afraid there are many little boys and girls that haven't as good a bed as you have nor fire enough to keep them warm," she responded.

At this point the two younger children, as if determined to play some part in the conversation that was going on, started from their corner, and keeping close to the wall were soon at their mother's side, before their action was noticed by either Elwood or Vernon.

Their bodies were very scantily clad, and their faces showed but too plainly that they had not always had enough to eat; but their supper to-night had fully satisfied them, and they had played with considerable glee, and

as soon as they felt safe, what wondering eyes they raised to the strangers before them !

Who can tell how soon children begin to study the "problem of life?"

Each of the young men put his hand into his pocket, and taking out a silver coin, put it into the hands of one of the children, with directions to "give it to mamma," and after bidding Harry good-bye they started toward the door.

"Indeed, sirs," said Mrs. Howard, "I wouldn't take help from any one if Harry was well, and I was able to work"—Vernon here noticed the hollow cough, but the room was not quite light enough to see the hectic flush on her cheek, which would have showed still more plainly how unable she was to fight the hard battle before her—"but we have had such a hard time to get along before those women brought us the things to eat and the medicine for Harry."

"But, mamma," spoke up Harry, "I'm going to get well now, and I'll earn lots of pennies, and we can have plenty of coal and all we want to eat too."

There was a tear in the eyes of both the young men as they shook hands with Mrs. Howard, and Elwood asked her just before he closed the door if there were not two girls named Russell living in the same building.

"Yes," was the reply, "they live in the room directly below ours, but I don't expect their father and mother will let them attend the Sunday School any more from what the girls have told me."

"I'll see them and inquire," answered Elwood, and then they descended the stairs, and, in response to Elwood's knock at the door, a very gruff voice said: "Come in, whoever you be!"

The dim candle burning on the table revealed very little to the sight except dirt, squalor and disorder, the few

articles of furniture being scattered about in utter confusion. The father and mother sat on opposite sides of the room, each puffing a pipe filled with tobacco, and the stifling atmosphere was so oppressive that Vernon involuntarily drew back and stood in the hallway, awaiting the result of Elwood's visit.

"I came to inquire about your two girls, Rachel and Julia," the latter said, "as they haven't been to Sunday School for some time."

The answer came from both man and woman in such gruff tones and broken sentences that Elwood could not determine whether they were natives or emigrants from the darkest and remotest quarters of the earth; but their words translated into King's English were about these:

"You have, have you? You might just as well go on about your business. So you are one of the people that teaches the children of poor and honest parents not to go out and gather a little money for them, when there's plenty of people have money enough to give. Very like we'll let the lasses go to a place where they get too proud to mind their father and mother!"

Neither in his books nor in his experience, had Elwood learned any way to answer such heathenism as this, so he rather abruptly withdrew from the room, merely saying "Good evening," to which they gave no response.

At the farther end of the hall they met the two girls, very thinly clad, with a small tin bucket evidently containing beer or some stronger drink, which they were carrying to their parents.

Doubting the wisdom of saying anything to them concerning the Sunday School, Elwood stopped long enough to speak their names and offer them his hand; but they shrank from him, and hastily said: "O, sir, we can not go to Sunday School any more; father and mother scold us and beat us for it—indeed, we can not."

As soon as the two young men reached the pavement Elwood pulled out his watch, and looking at it said: "Vernon, it is getting late. I had no idea we were staying there so long; let us hurry to our rooms."

But Vernon answered a little impatiently: "I don't believe I shall sleep much to-night; let us take a walk along the river front before we return."

Elwood consented reluctantly; and a few minutes' walk brought them to East river, and going out on one of the numerous piers they found the incoming tide approaching its full height, a number of large vessels being borne on its current.

They watched the flowing waters for several moments in silence, and then Vernon spoke: "Elwood, that tide is to me a symbol of the fate that rules the world. Nothing can arrest its ebb and flow. If we were exposed to its power, it would sweep us down without mercy; and no prayers or entreaties on our part would cause it to spare us for a moment. Is not the world ruled thus?"

Elwood looked at him in blank astonishment, but could only say in reply: "Why, you haven't lost all faith in the Providence of God, have you?"

"I hardly know how to answer that," was the rueful response. "I can see nothing but blind, irresistible force, to which we are all subject from the beginning to the end of our lives. I can see no Providence that interferes with this force or prevents its incessant operation. Are we anything but wheels in the vast machinery of the universe—anything but drops of water in the mighty ocean of existence?"

"O, Vernon," said Elwood earnestly, "we must not lose faith in the Divine Providence; life would be insupportable without it. God is in the tides; he is in the winds; he is in the storms!"

"Well, if there be such a Providence as you speak

of, why is not that poor woman with her children cared for? And those two Russell girls—you can easily see what their fate will be! And besides these, how many other poor creatures in this city are suffering for fire and food, and how many have no home but the pavement! Why is not some miracle wrought in their behalf, if miracles were ever wrought?"

"Such mysteries as these, I confess," replied Elwood, "are very hard to solve; but I know that Christianity is the only hope of the poor and wretched everywhere—do you know any other hope for them?"

Vernon made no reply to this, and soon Elwood continued: "But, Vernon, you are not always so sad as this. Haven't you something special on your mind? Has Clara Martin—but I beg pardon for my curiosity."

"You needn't do that, Henry, as I am very willing to tell you all she has written to me.—*Such is fate!* She could not have done otherwise, I suppose; and I certainly respect her candor and sincerity, especially since she assures me that her conclusion is the result of a painful struggle and many prayers and tears. But I can never give my love and affection to any other woman. I shall devote my life to the profession I have chosen. There is nothing miraculous or mysterious about medicine; everything is clear, positive and reasonable; and I feel certain I can do more to relieve human suffering as a physician than in any other capacity or profession—But do you notice the tide? It has reached its full height, and will soon ebb its way back to the sea—no power can resist it!"

CHAPTER XIII.

PROMISE AND PROSPECT.

This chapter shall be a record of two letters, which were as follows :

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, }
NEW YORK, Jan'y 1, 187-. }

MY DEAR MOTHER :

The beginning of another calendar year reminds me afresh how soon my three years' course at Union Seminary is to close. Only a few months—it might be more proper for me to say only a few weeks—remain, in which to complete my studies at this noted seat of theological learning.

City life has had considerable fascination for me ; and, on the whole, I have been very much stimulated in my studies by the limited contact I have had with the energy and activity of the metropolis. My work in the Mission Sunday Schools has shown me, that, in spite of all the wickedness and degradation of the "lower classes," there is a great deal of real goodness among them ; and there would be much more than there is, if it were only developed—but O, they have so poor a chance !

I have also learned that the very wealthy people of the city, although I have never mingled with them in "society," are not, generally, as selfish and hard-hearted as many take them to be. I have certainly found many noble men and women among them, who not only give large amounts of money in charity, but also devote a great deal of time and attention to the relief of the poor in various parts of the city.

Mrs. Howard, the woman I have told you so much about, died a few days ago. Her last days were made quite comfortable by the charitable women of the city ; and good homes have been secured for all three of her children. She had a very hard life of it ; and yet I have often heard her say, that she could not understand why the Lord was so good to her and her family, when so many other women and children suffered for the comforts of

life! Her son Harry is an exceedingly bright little fellow, and is warmly attached to me. Not long since, when I was talking to him about his future occupation, to my great surprise, he said he would like to be a preacher, and then added very earnestly: "Mr. Elwood, when you become a preacher, will you tell me how to preach too?"

You have often heard me speak of my College classmate, George Marvel. Judge then of my surprise at meeting him on the streets of New York a few days ago and finding him the same *Marvel* he used to be in College. When I saw him, he was giving his last piece of money to a street beggar, who, I thought, was imposing on his good nature, although I was not certain. He has a clerkship in a large mercantile establishment in the city, and is allowed a tolerably liberal salary; but his clothes are as threadbare as those he wore in College; and he told me it was impossible for him to save any money in a place like New York, where there are so many persons in need. Cold as the weather is, he has no overcoat; and I have been told that he frequently goes without his luncheon at noon, because he has no money to buy one.

Every one that knows Marvel admires this trait in his character, although I have found no one who thinks he ought to be *imitated*. I fear he will some day be seriously imposed upon, as there are so many people in the world inclined to take advantage of one so generous and good-natured.

My friend Vernon, whose theological difficulties I have frequently described to you, is taking lectures in the College of Physicians and Surgeons. I have talked with a number of his fellow-students; and they all say he will make a very fine physician, as he is so devoted to the study of medicine. He seldom alludes to religious or theological questions, or to his former engagement with Miss Martin, of Beulah; but when I showed him your last letter, in which you stated that you deeply sympathized with any young man who had to suffer so severely on account of his honest doubts, he seemed very much affected, and charged me to inform you how grateful he felt for such an expression of sympathy.

I hardly know whether Mr. Edwards would be satisfied with the Calvinism taught in Union Seminary or not. The Professors all declare their adherence to the doctrine of election; but some of them think it is stated in the Confession in too strong terms; and they have gone so far as to say they would be glad to see the third and fourth Sections of Chap. III stricken out of the book, or changed into an unqualified offer of salvation to every one that will believe in Christ and follow him!

Throughout my Seminary course, I have sought to secure the

best possible preparation for the ministerial office, ; but at times I feel such a shrinking from its responsibilities, that I almost fear I have mistaken my calling. Strange to say, I have had more of such feelings this year than during either my first or second year.

The question in what part of the country I shall seek a field of labor comes into my mind occasionally ; but I can safely leave that to the wisdom of Divine Providence—at any rate, I do not need to consider it at present.

From Your Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

BEULAH COLLEGE, March 1, 187-.

MY DEAR MR. ELWOOD :

Although I have not seen you since you graduated nearly three years ago, I have thought that you would like to hear something concerning the affairs of the College.

It gives me great pleasure to say that we have nearly twice as large an attendance of students as we had when you left, and that, through the liberality of some wealthy friends, our endowment has been largely increased ; so that our facilities for higher education will compare favorably with those of any College in our state.

You have no doubt been advised concerning the experiment of co-education that we entered upon two years ago. To our great surprise, there were nearly one hundred applications for admission to the various classes, preparatory and collegiate, from the young women of Beulah and other localities—a small number of whom we found ready for the Sophomore class ;—and at the Commencement a little over a year hence, we expect to graduate some eight or ten young women, including Miss Jordan, Miss Carroll and Miss Martin, of our village.

Miss Jordan, the first named of these, has, I think, overcome more difficulties in her pursuit of an education than any young person I ever knew. She is quite poor, and has a widowed mother who is an invalid, and therefore requires a great deal of care and attention from her ; but in spite of all difficulties, she has maintained a very good standing in all her studies—her ability to do this seems almost a *miracle* to the Faculty—and, if her health does not fail, she will be prepared to graduate with honor and credit. I do not believe, however, that she could possibly have sustained the burdens that she has without the sympathy and friendly offices that she has received from her classmates, especially Miss Carroll and Miss Martin.

Miss Carroll herself, I am certain, would have secured the Valedictory, on account her very high scholarship ; but when the

Trustees voted to admit young women to the privileges of the institution, they also voted to discontinue all Commencement honors.

[Did Mrs. Goodway prompt the Doctor to communicate to Elwood this information concerning her friend Alice?]

I often think about your classmate, Homer Vernon. It is very hard for me to understand his departure from the Christian faith. My feeling toward him is very different from what I have toward other skeptics and unbelievers, and I often pray that he may yet be restored to that knowledge of the truth which he—I can not think otherwise—once possessed. Prof. Ironsides often speaks of him, and says he will never recover from the shock he received when he first learned that Homer Vernon had become an unbeliever in the miracles of the Bible!

This letter is already longer than I expected it to be; and I have not yet reached my principal object in writing to you.

Mr. Williamson has resigned the pastorate of the Beulah Presbyterian church, and has accepted a call to another field. His resignation is to take effect the first of April, just a month from the present date; and, as your theological studies will be completed very soon after that time, I have talked to the Session and several other members of the church upon the question of inviting you to become their pastor; and they all—especially those who knew you while you were in College—seem highly pleased with the suggestion. Prof. Ironsides says that, although he would have preferred to see you receive your theological training at Princeton Seminary rather than Union, he yet has no reason to doubt your orthodoxy on all essential points of doctrine, and as he has the fullest confidence in your ability to fill the pulpit satisfactorily, he urged me to write to you on the subject without delay.

If you have not yet made any arrangements about your future work, let me request you not to do so at present, as I believe you will receive the call of this church—and I trust the Lord will direct you to accept it.

From Your Sincerest Friend,

JOSIAH GOODWAY.

P. S. Mrs. Goodway joins me in expressions of highest regard, and begs leave to express her hope that you will realize how promising and inviting a field of labor you would find at Beulah.

J. G.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOPING AND HELPING.

“Mother, there is nothing for me to do now, since you have gotten worse, and Mack has lost his place at Mr. Merchant’s, but give up my College course, although I am within only three months of graduating.”

“I feel very sorry, Blanche,” replied Mrs. Jordan, trying hard to speak in a cheerful tone, as she lay on her sick bed. “If I had only kept as well as I was and Mack hadn’t lost his place, it should not be so; still, if you have to quit College now, you may be able to graduate next year.”

“At any rate, mother,” said Blanche, with her usual quiet determination, “I must not complain. My friends have been very kind to me; but I don’t want them to help me any more, and I must earn something for us to live on.”

The mother and daughter then proceeded to discuss every opportunity for employment that seemed to be open in the village; but they could see nothing more encouraging for Blanche than her skill with the needle, to which she was largely indebted for the means of support she had heretofore secured—but she had very grave fears that her nervous system would not stand the strain of continued application to either needle or sewing machine.

Blanche tried very hard to preserve her composure under the realization that she must postpone, if not entirely relinquish, her hope of graduating; but the struggle was

too severe for her, and, at length, she laid her head on her mother's bed, and cried bitterly.

But the darkest clouds often break away very suddenly; and, at the very moment when her spirit seemed most crushed, and her tears flowed most freely, she heard a knock at the door.

Very hastily wiping her eyes, she responded to the summons, and was greatly embarrassed, on opening the door, to meet her friends, Alice Carroll and Clara Martin. They looked at Blanche's face, and then at each other, but without uttering anything beyond the usual greeting, obeyed the invitation to enter.

Both Alice and Clara had frequently been at Blanche's home; but there was now such a pressure of reserve upon their feelings, that they unconsciously looked about the room, as they took the chairs that were offered them, as if this were their first acquaintance and first visit.

They saw no richly furnished apartment, no shining rugs, or costly carpets, or damask curtains; but every thing about the room gave sign and token of a neatness and refinement that could not fail to charm the eye of every friendly beholder.

O, when will all men and women learn that the beauty of their homes does not consist in the abundance or the costliness of the "things" they possess?

There is no human dwelling so humble, that it may not become a beautiful paradise; there is no rough floor so rough, that it may not be made to shine with exceeding brightness; there is no crust of bread so dry or so hard, that it may not be transformed into the manna of heaven:—if the angels of peace and order are invited to abide under our roofs!

There was comparative silence for a few minutes after the first greetings were over, and they had entered Mrs. Jordan's room to offer her their sympathy, when Alice

said, very gently and delicately: "Blanche, we have feared since your mother became so much feebler, that you would have so much to do, that you couldn't keep along in your studies and prepare for Commencement—you'll let us help you in taking care of your mother and your household work, won't you?"

And Clara immediately added: "Indeed, Blanche, it is no more than we ought to do, when there are so many things demanding your time and attention. It will really be a pleasure to us to do what we can for you."

Blanche looked at them both very gratefully, and it was some minutes before she could answer them. At length she said, in faltering tones: "You have already been very kind to me; but it will be impossible for me to graduate this year, since my brother Mack has lost his place at Mr. Merchant's store, and mother is so poorly. Mother and I were talking about it just before you came in, and we both came to that conclusion."

"No, no, Blanche, you must not quit College," said both Alice and Clara, rising up, and laying each a hand on Blanche's shoulder, with a look of heartiest sympathy. And presently Alice continued in a low voice: "Now, Blanche, you mustn't be offended on account of what we have done. We have thought for some time past that you were working too hard and had too much care on your mind, but we didn't see any way to relieve you. We consulted my father, and he at once said that any one making such an effort as you were making deserved both sympathy and financial help. He gave us enough to start a purse for you, and advised us to call upon Dr. Goodway and some other friends."

"O Alice," said Blanche, in a very deprecating tone, "you didn't do that; indeed, I would rather——"

"But *we* would rather have you graduate with us," was the quick reply; "and we were careful not to call on

any but your friends, and every one seemed so glad to help you. Dr. Goodway said it gave him the greatest possible pleasure to do something for you; and Prof. Ironsides told us, that, although he still feared the College was not acting in strict accordance with the Scriptures in its admission of young women, he would very willingly contribute to help you complete your course, and he hoped you would secure a good situation after you graduated. Although we only called on a few of your friends, we have secured enough to enable you to graduate with the rest of us; and Clara and I will help you take care of your mother, so you will have time to prepare for Commencement."

"If any one but you girls had done this," said Blanche, her voice choking with feeling, "I would not accept the offered help. I hope you will never find me ungrateful to you and my other friends."

"Never mind about about that, Blanche," they both exclaimed. "You don't know how much pleasure it gives us to do the little we have done for you."

"But, Alice," continued Clara, after a very short pause, you haven't told her every thing yet."

"Knowing what good friends Mr. and Mrs. Merchant have always been to your mother," said Alice, "we called at their house to see what they would like to do for you. Mrs. Merchant gave us \$—, and urged us to wait until Mr. Merchant returned from the store, as she expected him every minute, and she believed he would want to do something for you, although he had recently discharged Mack from his store. When he came in, and we introduced the matter to him, he seemed very thoughtful, and, after a few moment's reflection, said he wanted to contribute liberally, as he feared he had been hasty in discharging Mack, much as the boy was to blame for carelessness. He said this in so serious a manner, that, without stopping to think, I looked him directly in the face and remarked that perhaps

Mack would do better if he had another chance. As soon as I had spoken, I began to apologize for the liberty I had taken; but he promptly stopped me by saying that he would consider that; and before we left, he said to us: 'You may tell Mrs. Jordan that I will come to see her one day this week, and if Mack shows the right disposition, I will either take him back or help him get another place'—and you know Mr. Merchant always does as he says he will."

"I am so grateful to you," said Mrs. Jordan, rising from her pillow with fresh life and hope in her face; "I regretted very much to have Mack leave Mr. Merchant's store; and he has been so sorry that he lost his temper and wasn't more careful about his work."

Mr. Merchant's promise was made good, and a week later Mack returned to his store, and ever afterward proved a faithful and efficient clerk.

A few days after the Commencement exercises, Mr. Carroll came into his house with a look of great satisfaction, and, in response to his daughter's inquiry as to the cause of it, said to her: "Alice, you have always desired to become a teacher; and to-day two or three members of the School Board said to me that they would like very much to elect you to the vacancy in the High School, as they believed the education you have received would fully qualify you for the position."

"Yes, father, I have always wanted to be a teacher," she replied, in a tone he was utterly unable to interpret; "and this would be a very desirable position for me, but——"

To which Mr. Carroll's only reply was a look of disappointment and astonishment.

"Don't think me unappreciative or ungrateful, my dear father," she said, rising up before him and throwing

her arms around his neck; "but I have been thinking for some days that Blanche Jordan ought to have that school, and I was just getting ready to go and see her and urge her to apply for it. She might secure as good a situation some other place, but her mother is so poorly and needs so much attention from her—don't you think the Board would elect her, if you would recommend her?"

"They surely would, Alice, if you were also there to plead her cause!" he responded, with a look of warmest admiration; "but do you think you ought to make such a sacrifice as this even for Blanche's sake? Can you hope for any reward that will justify you?"

"I can certainly hope that Blanche will fill the position satisfactorily—and will not the Lord open the way for whatever work he wishes me to do? This has always been my hope and my confidence.—You will let me tell Blanche that you will favor her application, won't you, father?"

"Thank heaven for such a daughter!" was his response, as he pressed her closely to his breast.

CHAPTER XV.

CREED AND CONFESSION.

BEULAH, November 1, 187-.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

One year of my labor as pastor of this church has just closed. It has certainly been a year of discipline and experience to me; and I trust I have been enabled to perform some service for the people. I have at least become very much attached to them; and they have given me a great many expressions of approval and encouragement in reference to my preaching and my pastoral work—and yet I am oppressed at times with the thought that I have accomplished so little in comparison with all that I would have liked to accomplish.

I preached a sermon a few Sundays since in which I dwelt at some length on the infinite fullness of the divine love and the universality of the offer of salvation, and expressed my belief that Christ had made a sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole race, if they would only comply with the conditions of the gospel.

I had no idea at the time that I was preaching anything that could even be construed as contrary to the soundest Presbyterian doctrine; but meeting Prof. Ironsides the next day, he gravely expressed the fear that the opponents of Calvinism would take advantage of my sermon, and he therefore urged me not to preach in any way that is calculated to impair the Calvinistic system of doctrine as embodied in our Confession of Faith.

"What part of the Confession," I asked, "did my sermon deny or contradict?"

"O, I will not say," he replied, "that you have done this directly; but I fear the tendency of your preaching is to undermine rather than build up, our Calvinistic system, especially"—here he looked me in the face very seriously—"in view of the fact that you haven't preached a strictly doctrinal sermon since you began your ministry."

"His tone and manner were so serious, although not unfriendly, that I have been thinking on the subject ever since,

and have studied the Confession of Faith more since that time than in all my life before. I have examined every chapter and section of the book very carefully, remembering my solemn declaration of belief that it "comprises the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures," and have given special attention to the two sections which state that "some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death," and that the number of these "is so certain and definite that it cannot be increased or diminished."

I called on Dr. Goodway a few days after my interview with Prof. Ironsides, and pointing out these two sections frankly told him I could not reconcile them with the many passages in the Bible offering salvation and eternal life to all who will repent of their sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk in the paths of wisdom and righteousness.

"Why, really, Mr. Elwood," he said, after reading the two sections very carefully and slowly, "those statements are very strong and rigid, more so than I have supposed; but we must interpret them by the other portions of the Confession, and we must also bear in mind that the doctrine of election, like other Scriptural doctrines, is full of mystery. Have you noticed that the eighth section of this same chapter admonishes us that "the doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care?"

"But, Dr. Goodway," I replied, "these sections seem to me both unreasonable and unjust, and how am I to avow my belief in them?"

"Perhaps, Mr. Elwood," he answered smilingly, "you are simply wrestling with the everlasting difficulty of reconciling the Divine Sovereignty with man's free agency and responsibility. This problem has a great many phases, and no one has ever fully solved it. Besides"—he added, with a slight twinkle—"the Westminster divines were not infallible; and it would be very strange if no progress had been made in our theology and our interpretation of the Scriptures in the space of two hundred years!"

"Very true," I replied, "but I have given my solemn subscription to the Confession."

"But you must also remember," he said, "that you are commissioned to preach the Gospel to every creature, and if you are faithful to this trust, you can surely maintain your position as a Presbyterian minister without a violation of your ordination vows."

"That is what I desire above all things," I answered.

"And let me say for your encouragement," he continued,

"that your ministry is proving very acceptable. We have very little difficulty in getting the students to attend church since you came, and besides the increase in the membership of the church, your congregations seem to be growing larger all the time."

I believe I have heretofore written to you concerning my acquaintance with Mr. Allison, the Episcopal Rector in this place. He is only four or five years older than I am, and our relations are very cordial and confidential; so that we can converse on all topics relating to our work with perfect freedom. When I stated my difficulties with the Confession to him I was completely surprised at the manner in which he answered me:

"Why, Elwood," he said, almost playfully, "You will have to treat your Confession as we do the Thirty-nine Articles."

I was too much surprised to inquire at first what he meant, and as if in anticipation of my inquiry, after a moment's pause, he continued: "We let them stand as written, and seek to give them the proper interpretation."

Seeing my increased surprise he assumed a more serious tone and added: "There is no other proper course for thinking men to take, and our church wisely allows us great latitude in this respect."

"But, Allison, how is it possible," I asked, "to interpret these sections of the Confession, so they will mean anything else than what they manifestly do mean?"

"Your Confession is more extreme in its Calvinism than our seventeenth article," he said, in reply, "but neither your creed nor ours can be said to contain the last word on any theological question, and neither of them even pretends to solve all the mysteries of the divine government. Our only truly reverent course, therefore, is to give them the most reasonable interpretation we can, always remembering the words of St. Paul, 'For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life!'"

"But is there not danger of our becoming deceivers in this way," I inquired, "both self-deceivers and deceivers of the people?"

"There is danger of this," he quickly replied, "if we are 'of the earth, earthy;' but not, if like St. Paul, we can truly say, '*And herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.*'"

"As I made no direct answer to this, he presently continued:

"Are you not aware, Elwood, that it is no easy matter to preach the doctrine of election as Calvin preached it?"

"You will have to tell me what you mean by that, Allison," I responded.

"We may easily use the same language and terms that he used, and still fail of the *essence* of the doctrine. Calvin emphasized the relation of the individual soul—rather of the elect soul—to the Infinite Father, and based that relation on the plans and counsels that are from all eternity. It was a noble conception, but there is great danger of making it a mere gospel of partiality and favoritism, instead of a means of spiritual inspiration and quickening. We must not exalt the Divine Sovereignty at the expense (if I may use that term) of the Divine Love and Goodness. In short, the doctrine of election should be spiritually discerned and *spiritually preached*—if preached at all," he added, with a smile.

If almost any other person had expressed himself to me in this way, I would have seriously doubted his integrity; but as I know Allison to be a sincere and earnest minister, I could not but think his counsel very valuable to me, and I so expressed myself to him.

I will try to comply with your request to write you concerning the three young women of Beulah, in whom you have become interested from what I have told you about them.

Miss Martin is at home, and is somewhat noted for the active part she takes in all the services of the Methodist church, and for such charitable and benevolent work as is called for in the village. She appears to be the special friend of every one that is sick or in distress, and is almost wholly absorbed in her labor for others.

Miss Jordan is teaching in the Beulah High School, and I am glad to learn is very efficient and successful. She has won quite a reputation for the perfect order and discipline of her school, which has been secured in such an easy and quiet manner.

Miss Carroll has been hearing some recitations in the preparatory department of the College; and I think at the next meeting of the Trustees will be elected to a permanent position. Although she is a member of the Episcopal church, she nearly always attends my Wednesday night prayer-meetings and manifests a lively interest in all the exercises, especially in the remarks that I usually make on the Scriptural lesson. Although I always try to prepare for this service with reference to the entire audience, I can not help thinking of her probable presence and feeling anxious to offer such remarks as she will appreciate and approve. I have almost fancied that she unconsciously helps me to understand what will be most acceptable and profitable to the people, although I have no acquaintance with her that would justify me in asking any counsel from her.

I am not certain that she has ever expressed any approval in words; but her face always reveals an interest that is very grateful

and inspiring to me; and if she were an attendant at my Sunday services, I know not how much influence she might have on my sermons.

It is pretty generally thought that she and Allison will at some time form a matrimonial engagement, if they have not already done so. I know Allison has a very high opinion of her; but he has never spoken to me as if there were any engagement or understanding between them. Still he confers with her frequently about the affairs of his parish, and surely bids fair to win her affection, if he has not already won it."

I received a letter from Vernon a short time since, stating that he was about to locate at Excelsior, as he believed the capital city of our State would furnish an excellent field for the practice of his profession. Miss Martin, I am informed, scarcely ever alludes to him, but I know that she carries a feeling of deep sadness on account of the breaking of their engagement. I do not believe either of them will ever marry any one else.

Your Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHY AND WHEREFORE?

Elwood had been preaching at Beulah about three and a half years, when he and his friend Allison were taking an afternoon stroll of two or three miles into the country. After more or less discussion of politics, current news and various commercial and social questions, as they sat down by the roadside their thoughts turned to their professional work.

Elwood was the first to speak: "Allison, after all my efforts, how little I have accomplished during the time I have been at Beulah! Do all preachers feel this way, or is it because I am such an essentially unprofitable servant?"

"Would it be a desirable thing for you to feel satisfied with your work, especially at such an early date in your ministry?" was Allison's rather unexpected reply, and then he added: "I have known quite a number of young preachers to have their usefulness for life impaired by their 'success'—or rather their conceit of success—in the first years of their work. But at the same time you have no reason to feel discouraged. You have had a number of accessions to your church; your congregations are quite large, and you have hosts of friends, both in your church and the community. If I did not fear you would accuse me of flattery, I would pronounce your ministry eminently successful and useful."

"And still," said Elwood, "I feel at times that I have

done nothing for the cause of Christ that is worth mentioning. My sermons do not always take hold of the people as I would wish; and very often the other services seem like a burden both to myself and the congregation. What would I do, if I had to render the Episcopal service every Sunday?"

Allison smiled very pleasantly at this sally, and then replied: "If you will let me relate a little of my experience, perhaps I could give you a hint in reference to your formal services that would be of some value to you."

"Certainly," replied Elwood, with some eagerness, "any light on the subject will be gratefully received."

"Notwithstanding my appreciation of the beauty of our service," Allison responded, "after I had preached in Beulah two or three years, I began to realize that I was rendering it in a *sing-song* or very monotonous tone, that savored much more of perfunctory performance than of devout worship—will you let me inform you how I first learned the secret of giving vitality to our service?"

Elwood quickly smiled his assent, and Allison continued: "You know what an active and faithful parishioner Miss Carroll is?"

This was not put in the tone of formal inquiry; but Elwood unconsciously nodded an affirmative response. He had frequently heard Allison speak of her in connection with his parish work; but this time there was a flutter in his breast that he tried very hard to suppress, and only partially succeeded in doing so.

Without noticing this or the fact that Elwood was paying very close attention to him Allison went on: "She has one of the largest classes in our Sunday School, and is a regular attendant at the Sunday service; in which I have always found her a devout and intelligent participant. Her voice always seemed so clear and expressive, and so free from the peculiar tone I was trying to overcome in myself,

that in talking to her upon the subject, I frankly stated my difficulty, and rather playfully asked her if she could prescribe a remedy."

"To my surprise she promptly answered that she could suggest none but a thorough and devout study of the service every week. I replied to this that I pretty nearly knew the Prayer-book by heart, and sometimes feared I knew it too well. Then she told me that she could never get her Sunday School class interested in the lesson unless she studied it over very carefully before assuming to teach it, and she thought a minister could make the service more interesting in the same way, as people all liked to drink water fresh from the fountain." [And still Allison did not notice how intently Elwood was listening to his narrative.] "Handing her the Prayer-book I asked her to read some portions of it, which she did in so expressive a tone that she furnished me a new revelation of the beauty and richness of our liturgy and the use that can be made of it in quickening and edifying a congregation of worshippers. Her conception was so clear, so vivid, I might almost say so glorious!"

"And did you carry out her suggestion?" asked Elwood.

"It was put so pertinently," Allison reponded, "that I resolved to give it a test. I found it very hard to break up the bad habit I had formed; but I have at least learned that the more I study the service over and the more I can make it expressive of my freshest and most spiritual thoughts and feelings, the more acceptable it is to my congregation—and now if some one would tell me how to vitalize my preaching, I would surely be grateful."

"I am very glad," said Elwood, "that you claim no monopoly of Miss Carroll's 'revelation'; and why should it not apply to the Presbyterian formal services?"

"It certainly does," was the reply, "and I have given you the full benefit of it."

Allison's tone throughout this conversation indicated very plainly that he felt an interest in Miss Carroll far beyond that which a clergyman is bound to feel for any of his parishioners, and that he would fain secure from her a much larger interest in his life and ministry than she had ever yet manifested. He said no more to Elwood concerning her, but when alone in his room that night he thus soliloquized :

"Why is it that while she is so frank, so cordial, so sympathetic I may almost say, that I am utterly unable to express to her the interest I feel in her and my high appreciation of her intellect and character? Pleasant as our acquaintance has been, I can not even claim the right to feel a special attachment to her—much less love and affection. No, I must not say *love*; but I must find out whether she cares anything for me, and whether she will reciprocate the interest I feel in her."

Why were Allison's feelings in reference to Miss Carroll wrought to such a painful tension by his interview with Elwood?

He certainly knew not the cause himself; and he had not the shadow of a thought that his friend might be unconsciously standing between himself and the prize he coveted.

But is not many a maiden controlled in the current of her affections by a force that she wots not!

CHAPTER XVII.

STRIFE AND STRUGGLE.

The First Presbyterian church of Excelsior, capital of the State of X——, was one of its oldest institutions. Soon after the close of the war the old structure had been torn down, and a new one, more substantial and more capacious, had been erected in its place. The building was only two or three squares from the State House, and it was fitted up in a style that satisfied the tastes of the richest families of the city.

And there was a goodly number of these families upon the rolls of this church's membership. There were people within its folds who had begun life on small means or none at all, and who had worked, and saved, and prospered in business, and made investments when property was cheap, and had accumulated large amounts; there were men who had speculated in corner lots and railroad stocks, and whose ventures had proved successful beyond their highest expectations; men who had inherited large fortunes, and had doubled and trebled the same by care and sagacity; men of large business capacity, who had combined their means in manufactories and other enterprises, and had thereby added very largely to their own wealth and that of the city.

But there were also people in this church with whom Fortune had not dealt so kindly; those who had labored hard and had "accumulated" little or nothing; those who had invested to no profit; those who had traded and spec-

ulated and lost all; those whose lives had been a constant battle with adversity, and whose strength was well-nigh exhausted in the incessant and hopeless struggle. Whether all these were victims of improvidence, or of direct misfortune, or of inexplicable fate, we do not assume to say; we only wish to record the fact that the membership of this church comprised some people that were very rich and others that were very poor, as well as some that were comparatively rich and some that were comparatively poor.

Was it possible for them to meet together every Sunday and worship their common Lord and Master, with minds free from all envy and strife and bitterness?

It was only during the last few years that such an issue had arisen in this church. Previous to the war, although the membership were not all rich, and not all poor, they were not conscious of any distinction among themselves in respect to wealth or earthly possessions. During the war a number of families in the church were started on the high road to wealth; but there was such a unity of patriotic sentiment among all the members of the church and congregation, that no lines of social distinction appeared to be drawn.

But when the war closed, and these fortunes continued to increase—when the prosperous families built larger houses and assumed the “style” and manners of a city aristocracy—it was impossible for either them or the poorer classes not to feel conscious of a serious barrier to their united worship in the sanctuary of the Lord.

Dr. James Bascom was pastor of the church for nearly forty years previous to his death, which occurred a few years after the close of the war; and although the dividing line between the rich and the poor began to be visible before he died, they all held him in great veneration, and their tears of sincerest grief were mingled over his remains.

After Dr. Bascom's death the church was "supplied" by various ministers for a couple of years; and then by a unanimous vote, Mr. Arthur Raymond was invited to the pastorate.

Raymond had served the village church of Eureka for ten full years, with marked earnestness and faithfulness; and his abilities were recognized as fully equal to the demands of the Excelsior church. Although he was scrupulously careful to keep within the pale of orthodoxy, his preaching had a decided flavor of originality; and it was very generally remarked of him, that he did his own thinking, and was not afraid to express what he thought or believed.

Although he had views on many religious and other topics that his people did not fully accept, he generally expressed them in such a way as to avoid offense; and his people had such respect for his honesty and integrity, that his relations with them were always pleasant and cordial.

In his peculiar and forcible style he denounced profanity, drunkenness, licentiousness, covetousness, falsehood, selfishness, and all other forms of evil, and always found his church on his side and ready to sustain him in his utterances; and very deeply did they regret his acceptance of the call to Excelsior.

For a few weeks, for a few months, for almost a year, after Raymond came to his new charge, everything moved along smoothly and very pleasantly; and if his individual views and peculiarities had been limited to theological questions, he might have enjoyed the same even tenor of ministerial life that he did at Eureka. But for a few years past he had given some attention to socialistic questions; and he came to the city with certain views, or more properly feelings, that assumed a very tenacious hold of his mind before he had preached in the city a twelvemonth.

He had never seen much of city life; but he had read

a great deal about the glaring inequality of circumstances and conditions that is to be seen in all great cities; and when he came to Excelsior and found the reality so much greater than any conception he had ever formed, his heart was sore, and he felt a burning, almost a consuming, desire to provide a remedy for what he considered such monstrous injustice.

And he was especially burdened with the question how far his church was responsible for the evil that was patent to his eyes. Even when he limited his observation to his own membership, he was pained to see many of them all the while surrounded with luxury and abundance, while those whom they called their brethren and sisters in the Lord were struggling with their utmost strength to secure a comfortable livelihood—some of them failing even in this. These feelings were painfully increased whenever he contemplated the *aggregate* of poverty and destitution in the city, which he was so powerless to relieve.

As he became acquainted with the rich families of his church, he was much grieved to see the ill-disguised contempt which many of them felt toward the "laboring classes," whose bodies and souls, in Raymond's eyes, were just as valuable as those of the rich and the powerful.

He thought, he brooded, he prayed over these things, and then began to preach about them, his first discourse being a discussion of the much mooted question, "Why do not the masses attend church?" Various causes, particular and general, were considered and dwelt upon; and at the close an urgent appeal was made to the people to take home the question, whether as a church and as individuals, they were doing all they could to bring the people of the city, and especially the poor, within the hearing of the Gospel.

All this was listened to with perfect decorum and respect; and even the wealthiest and most stylish families

stepped out of the church and into their carriages, which were in waiting in the street, without taking offense.

But Raymond did not stop at this. The next Sunday the same point was urged a little more directly, and the next Sunday still more so, the preacher even going so far as to intimate that Christian women ought to encourage their "domestics" to attend the services of the church.

Soon after this a "strike" occurred—on account of a reduction of wages—among the laborers in a manufacturing establishment, in which two of his elders were stockholders, and a half-dozen of his members were employes. The men complained that their wages were already too low for them to live comfortably, and that the proposed reduction would deprive them of very many necessities of life. The corporation insisted that they were losing money, and that they must either reduce expenses or shut down altogether. Raymond's sympathies were with the workmen to such an extent, perhaps, as to warp his judgment; and the best information he got convinced him that the management, at best, were more anxious to pay large dividends on their stock than to give liberal wages to their men. He was so decided in this opinion, which was intensified by visits to the homes of some of the workmen, that he expressed it quite freely to a number of persons, by whom it was reported to his stockholding elders.

A discussion was started in the daily papers of the city; and in response to a communication, in which the Labor Unions of the city were pretty severely criticised for their unreasonable demands, Raymond took up his pen in their behalf, and wrote a very pungent article, in which he reminded capitalists that all their wealth was the result of labor, and expressed the hope that some remedy might be devised for the "alarming concentration of wealth in the hands of a few."

The article to which Raymond replied had a fictitious

signature; but it was written by Col. Peabody, who had "interests" in nearly all the leading manufactories of the city, and was considered "the richest man in the First Presbyterian church;" and from that time it began to be whispered among certain members of the church that their minister was a "socialist."

Raymond's course very naturally raised him quite a following among the laboring classes, and numbers of them began to attend his church services, besides giving him many other marks of their approval. He was not blind to the fact that his peculiarly friendly relations with this class were arousing a good deal of suspicion in the minds of his richer members, but he would have regarded a suggestion to pay heed to this fact as a temptation of Satan; and the friendship manifested toward him by the various societies and organizations of laboring men caused him to show more and more interest in them and in every "issue" that was raised between them and their employers.

The Session of the church did not object—they surely were not conscious of such an objection—to his laboring ever so earnestly for the moral and spiritual welfare of these people; but they were "surprised" when a score or more mechanics and laboring men, with their wives, presented themselves in one body for examination and admission to the church.

They were all admitted by a unanimous vote of the Session; but it was the beginning of the end for poor Raymond!

Henceforth there were two parties in the church, not known as the rich and the poor, by any means, but as the "majority" and the "minority;" and for some time there was a steady increase in the numbers of the "majority."

The "minority" accused their minister of slighting them and trying to "crowd them out of the church," not-

notwithstanding the large sums they had contributed to his support and to building the new church edifice. Very many of them threatened to cancel their subscriptions and withdraw from the church; but such threats could have no influence on a man thoroughly devoted to "principle" and incapable of any consideration of mere worldly advantage.

An election of ruling elder was to be held, and the "majority" selected a mechanic named Harris as their candidate. The "minority" claimed that Harris had only been in the church a short time, and that he was too anxious to push himself forward over the heads of older members. Raymond believed that the election of Harris might be the means of securing the conversion of many more laboring men and getting them into the church; which remark caused Deacon Simpkinson rather impatiently to reply: "We don't want any more laboring men in our church—we have too many of them there already."

Harris was elected and ordained as elder in spite of the muffled protests of the "minority"—and the war was on!

Simpkinson's remark was quoted far and wide, and had its very natural effect in stirring up resentment and bitterness in the breasts of the "majority." He tried to explain by stating that he had always been glad to see all classes in the church, but he didn't like to see new members assume control and "crowd out the pillars of the church."

But this only provoked additional comment, and caused several new members to remark that there "were too many such men as John Simpkinson in the church, and that he ought to resign his office as ruling elder," with many remarks of like tenor in reference to other very rich men in the church.

And Raymond was held responsible for all these utterances!

As yet he saw no signs of danger to himself—he was in the right, he was fully assured, and more than two-thirds of the church were with him! But the one-third, or rather a fraction of a third, held the purse strings; and they quietly made up their minds that Raymond must “go;” and accordingly sarcasm and innuendo and every conceivable device was employed to make his position as uncomfortable as possible.

Smarting under these annoyances, Raymond asked his wife one day what he could do to relieve himself of such persecution.

It occurred to her that her husband might find some means to come to a better understanding with his opponents; but Raymond had never learned to consult his wife that he might have the benefit of her individual opinion, and so she checked her “impulse” to express this feeling, and instead remarked to him in a very kind and sympathetic tone: “How unkindly they are treating you, Arthur, after all your labors to build up the church!”

“It is because I am trying to preach the Gospel to the poor,” he replied, in a tone appealing for a still larger measure of her womanly sympathy.

“I fear such is the case, Arthur, and that you are indeed persecuted for your obedience to the Saviour’s command,” she answered, very tenderly. Then they reviewed and *re-reviewed* every grievance and slight and criticism that he had suffered for months past, until Raymond was worked up to such intensity of feeling, that he felt it to be his duty—he was not influenced, he fully persuaded himself, by any sense of personal injury—to preach a sermon on the subject the next Sunday, that the people might all see how much opposition he was encountering in his work, and how much he was suffering for his devotion to his Master’s cause.

“The people ought to know all that you have had to

bear, Arthur, but I hope you won't say anything to make more enemies than you now have!" remarked poor Mrs. Raymond.

The sermon was prepared and delivered accordingly. The greater part of Raymond's friends commended him for his courage and boldness, but others shook their heads and said they "feared the consequences."

The "consequences" were, that during the week a number of the very rich men notified the Trustees that they would contribute nothing more to the support of the church while Raymond was its Pastor; and at the services on the following Sunday thereafter a large number of families were "conspicuous by their absence."

Raymond struggled hard to maintain his position—solely for the sake of the "principle" involved both he and his friends believed—but although a majority in (numbers) of the church stood by him to the last, in less than a year from the delivery of the fatal discourse, after consulting a number of his ministerial brethren, he resigned his pastorate for a more congenial field of labor.

And then the First Presbyterian church of Excelsior began to cast their eyes about, if haply they might find a more acceptable preacher and pastor!

CHAPTER XVIII.

"LIVE AND LEARN!"

"Josiah, you don't think that Herbert Allison and Alice Carroll are ever likely to marry, do you?" asked Mrs. Goodway of her husband one Sunday evening, after they had spent half an hour or more reviewing Elwood's ministry of nearly four years at Beulah and discussing his prospects for usefulness in the future.

"I have no power of divination in such matters," was his prompt reply; "but I should consider such an event as not at all unlikely; for he is an excellent fellow in every respect, just such a man as Miss Carroll would be inclined to accept. Indeed, it is generally understood that they are already engaged—but, of course, I do not know whether such is the case or not."

"I almost *know* it is not," she said, with some energy; "the last time I saw Alice, I spoke of Mr. Allison in such a way that if she had been engaged to him, she would have shown some signs of it. Of course, she highly respects him, and enjoys his society on account of his rare conversational powers, but nothing more—nothing more, I feel very certain!"

"But Allison would like very much to marry her, Hannah—I guess there can be no doubt on that point."

"That may be," she answered, in a tone no less emphatic than before; "but he can never secure her, if Henry Elwood——"

"You don't mean that Elwood would wish to become

Allison's rival in such a matter as this? Their close friendship, if nothing else, would forbid it."

Assuming a lower tone, Mrs Goodway presently responded: "When I spoke to Alice about Mr. Allison, I also took the liberty to ask her, in a very casual way, how she liked Mr. Elwood's preaching; and she replied that she had never heard him preach, although she had frequently attended his Wednesday night prayer-meetings. I then urged her to come and hear him some Sunday, and she promised to do so during Mr. Allison's coming vacation—and did you notice that she was there to-day, both morning and evening?"

"Did she seem much interested?" said the Doctor, rather playfully.

"You would surely have thought so, if you had watched her as closely as I did," was her ready response; "and I was very glad Mr. Elwood preached as eloquently as he did. If she could only hear him preach regularly, I am certain she would admire his eloquence; for there are very few more eloquent preachers than Mr. Elwood, at least among those of his age!"

The Doctor making no reply to this, in a few moments she continued: "Josiah, I have some fears that Mr. Elwood will not stay in Beulah very much longer!"

"What makes you think that?" he asked, in a tone of unaffected surprise. "His ministry has been very successful; the people are all satisfied with him; and he has already won an enviable reputation, not only in our Presbytery, but throughout the Synod of X——."

"That is just what makes me fear he will be called to some larger place," she responded—and then handed him the last copy of the New York *Evangelist*, which stated that the First Presbyterian church of Excelsior had appointed a special committee to secure a Pastor to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Arthur Raymond.

The Doctor read the item very slowly, and then remarked: "I feel very sorry for Raymond. He is a worthy and excellent man; but his trouble at Excelsior has culminated in about the way I expected it would. If that church were harmonious, it would be a very inviting field; but in its present condition, I don't believe Elwood would go there at any salary that might be offered him."

"But you know, Josiah, what 'inducements' those rich churches always offer when they want to secure a minister. I don't think myself that Mr. Elwood would go to Excelsior merely on account of the larger salary; but if they should give him a call, they would appeal to his sense of duty as well as his professional pride and ambition; and if he felt it to be his duty to go to them, nothing that we could say or do would prevent his going. Don't you believe they would urge him to accept their call, *because* their church is in such an unfortunate condition?"

"Well, Hannah," he said, endeavoring to suppress the uneasy feeling which her words and tone had aroused in his mind, "Elwood will not leave Beulah until he receives a call to some other place; and I do not believe he would accept a call even to a large and growing city like Excelsior without the most prayerful consideration."

"But don't you know that 'prayerful consideration' nearly always takes the minister to the larger field?" she quickly responded—and, after a moment's reflection: "I know of but one thing that would prevent Mr. Elwood's leaving Beulah, if he should be called to Excelsior—he *must* get better acquainted with Alice Carroll!"

"Beware of exercising any offices in that direction, Hannah," he said, very pleasantly,—"but if you *could* do anything that is strictly 'lawful' to prevent Elwood's ever leaving Beulah, I would not object to your doing it."

Three or four weeks after the above conversation

between Dr. Goodway and his wife, Elwood wrote to his mother :

BEULAH, August 1, 187-.

MY DEAR MOTHER :

I know that you appreciate the extent of my ministerial labors; but even this is not sufficient excuse for my delay in answering your last letter.

The longer I preach the more I realize the need of divine guidance in all things. I have so many different classes of people to deal with, and I meet so many questions demanding the exercise of my best reason and judgment, that I have been led to pray every day for light and wisdom. But how important it is for me to put away all guile and conceit and selfishness! It is so easy for a preacher to deceive himself and to think he is following the direction of the Holy Spirit, when he is only gratifying his own pride or pursuing his own advantage.

I am glad that Mr. Edwards is not seriously alarmed about my difficulties with the Confession of Faith. My study of the Chapter that gave me so much trouble has brought me to the conclusion, that the mysteries of the divine government are too deep to be fathomed by the human mind, and that, while the statements of the Confession may seem crude and unreasonable, they yet embody the great truth of Divine Sovereignty; and I am certain that I yield to no one in my adherence to that truth—even if I can not accept all the *definitions* of the Confession as final. The imperfection of human language and the imperfection of the human understanding, it seems to me, alike prove the impossibility of framing a *perfect* statement or explanation of that doctrine—it is so deep, so vast, so incomprehensible!

I sincerely trust that I have come to the right conclusion concerning these sections of the Confession of Faith; but I should shudder at the thought of going through the same process with reference to any other portions of it. The thought has troubled me not a little, that I would not wish to express all my conclusions to my people, at least not in the public congregation; and I should certainly fear to have all the members of our Presbytery know how much liberty I have taken in construing the Confession, lest they should pronounce me heterodox, if not unfaithful to my ministerial obligations. Still, I feel that if my church fully understood my views and my *motives*, they would not wish me to resign my pastorate; and I don't think even Prof. Ironsides would say I ought to withdraw from the Presbyterian church! I certainly ought not to be counted disloyal, because I have sought to con-

strue one Chapter of the Confession in harmony with the other Chapters and with the Bible and reason.

Miss Carroll has been elected to a permanent position in the preparatory department of the College; and all the students, male and female, that recite to her, speak in the highest possible terms of her qualifications as a teacher. She is particularly noted for the faculty she has of getting *all* her pupils interested in their studies and of sustaining that interest constantly.

I have often told you of her attendance at my Wednesday night prayer-meetings and the interest she manifests in the exercises; but long as I have been preaching in Beulah, she never attended any of my Sunday services until this summer, when my friend Allison went east on a vacation. She came to my church the first Sunday of his absence, and has been there every Sunday since. I suppose I may count on her attendance at every service until Allison's return, which will be two or three weeks hence.

I can not say that I have preached better on account of her presence, but I *can* say that her attention and interest has been a wonderful inspiration to me both in preaching and conducting the other services. It is an influence that I can not quite understand, and I don't think that she herself is conscious of it—but it is none the less real on that account.

Much as I might desire an expression of her interest in words, I have never felt free to say anything to her concerning my own preaching; and she seems to avoid making any allusion to it when we meet—which, however, is very seldom. Her reserve on this point is quite a mystery to me, as she generally expresses herself with the utmost freedom and frankness.

[Ah, Elwood, you have not yet learned that the more you become acquainted with the opposite sex, the more mysterious they will be to you!—else how could they prove forever *interesting*?]

But, mother, if I appreciated and admired Miss Carroll even more highly than I do, I could not seek a more intimate acquaintance with her than I have—still less must I indulge in any tender sentiment toward her. If she is not already engaged to Allison, he both loves and admires her, and is every way worthy of her. My friendship for him and my self-respect both forbid me to feel any more interest in her than my acquaintance with her has caused me to feel.

I received a letter from Vernon a few days ago, in which he stated that the First Presbyterian church in Excelsior had been without a minister for several weeks, and that they were very anxious to secure one who could unite the opposing factions into which they have been divided, and preach in a manner acceptable to

both. Two or three members of the special committee had spoken to him about me, and he had advised them, by all means, to give me a call, and assured them that I would prove the very man they want. I sincerely trust they will not do it; for however I might feel honored by such a call, I have several years' work before me here—[are you certain, Henry, that there is no thought of Miss Carroll in your mind, although you never expect to win her love, in connection with your “work?”]—and I would not want my attention turned from it, even to the extent of considering a call from another field.

In spite of all my imperfections, my people are standing by me very nobly; and I do not want to be asked to leave them.

Your Most Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

And this was the mother's reply, received not many days afterward:

ARCADIA, August —, 187—.

MY DEAR HENRY:

I must confess that I feel some pride at even the suggestion of your receiving a call from the Excelsior church; but I will not assume to give you any counsel in reference to it, unless the call should actually come to you—in that case, you would certainly feel bound to give the matter the most serious and prayerful consideration.

When I read that portion of your letter relating to the Confession of Faith to Mr. Edwards, he looked very serious at first, and presently asked me to read it a second time. He then remarked very thoughtfully: “Henry has gone farther in his departure from strict Calvinism than I ever expected him to go, and I should certainly be pained to see him take the same liberty in construing the other portions of the Confession; but I have an abiding confidence in his faithfulness and steadfastness, and I do not think it will ever be possible for him to be led into serious error, or that he will ever relinquish his belief in any of the essential doctrines of Christianity.”

Feeling some curiosity to have his opinion in reference to the probability of your receiving the call from Excelsior, I also read what you had written on that subject, and, without saying anything myself, awaited his response. After only a moment's reflection, and with some animation, he said he believed you would be just such a pastor as that church was seeking, and he would not be at all surprised, if they should give you

a call. He did not, however, express his opinion as to what your duty would be in the case, and I did not think best to ask it.

But I must not forget to say what I wished to say in reference to Miss Carroll. You are more interested in her, Henry, than you wish to confess; and from what you write, I must infer that she has considerable admiration for your talents and appreciates your preaching very highly. All this is not inconsistent with her being engaged to Mr. Allison; but I doubt very much whether such is the case, and it may be that he has no more hold of her affection and no more right to seek her hand than you have. Your sense of honor in reference to your friend does you great credit, but you may be entirely mistaken about the facts in the case! You can surely find out—in due time—whether she is engaged to Mr. Allison or not, without doing anything to forfeit either his respect or hers. You can, at least, maintain a friendly acquaintance with her, and, at the same time, sustain your own dignity and self-respect. Your situation is rather peculiar, but your wit and sense ought to guide you to a right solution of the problem before you.

Nothing would tend more to the success and usefulness of your ministry than a happy marriage; and from all that you have told me concerning Miss Carroll, I believe she would be a helpmeet of inestimable value—and, although I may be only revealing a mother's partiality, I almost think she would rather be courted by you than by your friend Allison, and that she would yield her affection to you more readily than to him.

You will not be offended at my telling you, that you have yet something to learn about love and courtship as well as about theology and the duties of the ministerial office; and perhaps the best advice I could give you would be to quote the old and familiar maxim, "Live and Learn!"

From Your Affectionate Mother,

EMMA ELWOOD.

Elwood had just finished reading his mother's letter, when he was surprised by a visit from a humble mechanic living in the outskirts of the village, who, in very pitiful tones, requested his ministerial offices at the bedside of his daughter, who was dying of consumption.

"It's a very bad life she has lived, but she's sorry enough for it now, and she doesn't want to die before she's prepared for the other world. No one has come to see her

in her sickness, except Miss Carroll and Miss Martin, because she was once their schoolmate"—the poor man's sobs prevented his saying anything farther.

Maud Ingalls was the girl's name, and her story was familiar to every one living in the village. It was the ever old, and alas, the ever *new* story—for the tragedies of human passion are as unceasing as the tides of the sea, and spare neither city nor village nor country. It was the story of one who had loved too early and too well, and who had been betrayed, deserted and disgraced. Her parents sought relief from their sore mortification in venting reproaches upon her, that she knew not how to endure; her acquaintances slighted her wherever she went; she was poor, and very fond of dress, and was thereby attracted to the whirlpool of vice in the great city of Chicago; where, steeped in shame and degradation, she had swiftly run her course, from the gilded palace—down, *down*, DOWN—to the lowest brothel; and at last, when her health was completely broken, and all her charms had faded, she had written to her parents, who permitted her, none too willingly, to come home—to die!

So grievously sinned against, so grievous a sinner—only Infinite Wisdom can judge such a one!

Elwood went with the afflicted father at once, and found Alice and Clara sitting near the bedside of the sick girl, while her mother and younger brothers and sisters were standing about the room in a state of mingled grief and mortification.

Whatever may have been Elwood's idea about probing the consciousness of the sick or shriving the souls of the dying, he was ever ready to give his personal sympathy and the utmost possible consolations of his office to all who desired his services—but does he know just how to deal with such a case as this?

He turned toward Alice and Clara, and obtaining from

each of them a look of genuine sympathy, he breathed a prayer for grace and wisdom, and then approached the bedside of the feeble and wasted girl, the luster of whose eyes alone remained to tell what she had once been! In clear and kindly voice, he asked her if she wished him to offer a prayer in her behalf. She nodded her assent; and, after Alice and Clara had complied with his request to sing "Rock of Ages," he kneeled down, and fervently commended the afflicted one—what more, what *less*, could he do for her?—to the Father of all mercies, and invoked the choicest blessings of Heaven upon all the members of her family.

How grateful were his notes of sympathy to the distressed father and mother!

On his taking his leave, they followed him to the door, saying to him, with many tears: "Won't you be so kind, sir, as to attend her funeral? We want to bury her decently, although she has brought such disgrace upon us."

She died that night; and the next day, in the presence of only a few of her former schoolmates, including Alice and Clara, Elwood performed the last rites over her remains, committing her body to the earth whence it came, and her spirit to God who gave it!

There be many, *many* problems of life yet before you, Henry Elwood—problems that are not solved for you by any creed or catechism, or system of theology, or theories of philosophy.

You must "Live and Learn!"

CHAPTER XIX.

DESIRE AND DISAPPOINTMENT.

At the appointed time Herbert Allison returned from his eastern trip, and accompanying Alice Carroll to a concert one evening soon after, on their return to her home he was invited to come in, which invitation was gladly accepted.

It was something more than formal politeness on the young woman's part that prompted the request; for no one appreciated Allison's conversational gifts more highly than she did; and she was sincerely desirous of hearing his account of the various points and places he had visited during his absence—but Allison's mind was occupied with a very different theme!

She asked him question after question concerning New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and other eastern cities, which he answered in a tone so different from the one he generally used, that, for the first time in her acquaintance with him, she felt weary of his company—but he knew it not!

Then, as she showed a disposition to let him introduce whatever topic he might wish, he presently said, in a very slow and formal manner: "Miss Carroll, I have long desired to express to you my appreciation of the assistance I have derived from you in my professional duties, and I wish especially to express my gratitude for the suggestion you gave me in reference to the study of our service before rendering it—this suggestion has been.

of great value to me, much greater than I can express. Will you fully believe me when I say this?"

She was slightly annoyed at the intensity of his tone, but replied pleasantly and somewhat playfully: "I must believe whatever you assert on this point, Mr. Allison; but I really do not wish you to count yourself specially indebted to me. I only expressed to you the thought that came into my mind in answer to your question." ["Is it possible," thought Allison, "that she had no interest in me beyond that?"] "But, Mr. Allison, you haven't told me what preachers you heard in the eastern cities! Did you hear Mr. Beecher, and Phillips Brooks, and all the other famous pulpit orators?"

"Not all of them, by any means, as I was in New York only two Sundays and in Boston only one," he replied, rather indifferently, as he was determined not to be diverted from the purpose he had in mind; "but"—his tone suddenly becoming a little warmer—"much as I saw and heard while I was absent, my thoughts were turned toward Beulah most of the time."

"It's a very beautiful place, isn't it?" she responded, with a light, silvery laugh, that greatly increased Allison's determination to press his suit to a decisive point, "and such good people! and so many pleasant associations! No wonder you have become so strongly attached to your parish!"

"Yes," he replied, his voice beginning to show some trepidation; "I have become very much attached to my parish and my parishioners, especially"—he paused and looked into her face, but meeting no response, he could not quite speak the word "*you*," which trembled on his lips, still he must needs go on—"nearly all the time of my absence I thought about my parish work, and how much you might assist me, if——" and again he paused and looked at her very closely.

But the flush on her face was a very slight one; and Allison could see no sign or token that she was awaiting a farther revelation of his feelings.

On the contrary, she responded in the same light and merely friendly tone that she had used before: "I would certainly be willing to assist you in any way that I can, Mr. Allison."

"Why does she say 'Mr. Allison' so formally, and with so peculiar an inflection?" he thought, but dared not utter the words.

Then she sought to divert him by farther inquiries about the experiences of his vacation, and likewise by relating various incidents that had transpired in the village during his absence; but Allison's mind was absorbed in a single theme, and, notwithstanding the very unsatisfactory response he had met thus far, he must pursue this theme to the end—the time has come for her ears to hear the tale of his love in clear and unmistakable terms!

"Surely," he flattered himself, "when she answers me, she will not say 'No.'"

Rallying all his forces for a final effort, he essayed to address her in such a manner that she could not refuse to give him a direct answer: "Miss Carroll, I must express to you how high a regard I have always felt"—in vain he searched her eyes for some tender response—"for you, and how——"

She saw that he would not be diverted, and therefore quickly interrupted him: "Mr. Allison"—looking him directly in the face—"I certainly appreciate this expression of your good opinion, as I believe it is wholly sincere, but I must request you to go no farther. I have too much respect and friendship for you to desire an avowal of any feelings that I can not reciprocate."

Her tone was very kind, very gracious, very cordial, but it was also very *clear*; and Allison was clear-minded

enough to understand that farther persistence on his part, either now or hereafter, would be in vain.

He also realized that the high respect, which he knew she felt for him, now depended on his complete acceptance of the situation.

A few minutes' very pleasant, but somewhat restrained (especially on Allison's part) conversation closed their interview; and Allison took his departure with a heart very heavy from disappointment, but yet free from sore mortification and bitterness.

Severe as was his wound, Miss Carroll's delicate consideration of his self-respect was an alleviation for which he felt very grateful; and although his love for her was genuine and fervent, he did not feel that his LIFE depended on her reciprocation of his feelings—was he not still a man!

And Herbert Allison was capable of friendship for man as well as love for woman!

During their walk home from the concert, Alice had casually stated to him that she had attended the Presbyterian church during his absence, and, in a very unconscious manner, had expressed her high appreciation of Elwood's preaching. Allison paid no special attention to this at the time, and it passed out of his mind entirely, until he returned to his room and retired to rest—then it came back to him with peculiar vividness. There was nothing in her tone to indicate that she had any feelings toward Elwood that had caused her rejection of his advances; but there was something in it that caused Allison to associate their names and characters very closely in his consciousness; and he revolved the fitness of a union between them in his mind until he dropped to sleep—which was only an hour or two before morning; and soon after he awoke he resolved to present the matter to Elwood's consideration at the first favorable opportunity.

CHAPTER XX.

COUNSEL AND CONSIDERATION.

Elwood's mind was stirred by way of remembrance to a considerable extent by his mother's letter. It brought to his memory his first introduction to Alice Carroll, their meeting at Beecher's church, her close attention to his commencement oration, her attendance at his prayer-meetings, and her manifest interest in his preaching.

While the letter did not fully satisfy him that he would be justified in testing her feelings toward him, it set him to thinking and debating the question. He cherished no such cheap vanity as the belief that he could win her away from Allison; but he could not escape the feeling that there was something which would compromise his honor and self respect, if he should make any advances toward her while Allison was even seeking her heart and hand; and he therefore shrank from the least appearance of any interference with Allison's suit, without stopping to consider whether he would be successful or not.

"How glad I am," he inwardly thought, "that Allison will soon return," so that she will no more excite my interest by her attendance at my church—but still she will continue to attend my prayer-meetings." And then he reproached himself for wishing to be relieved of the pressure upon his feelings by the absence of so interesting and appreciative an auditor.

In two weeks more Elwood received a unanimous call

from the Excelsior church, at a salary just twice the amount he was getting at Beulah.

He waited till the next day before informing any of his people, and then called at Dr. Goodway's, and, after showing the Doctor and Mrs. Goodway the call, frankly stated that he desired their counsel and advice.

"Of course," said the Doctor, "you will have to consider this question in the light of duty; but *we* want you to stay in Beulah. There are certainly very many reasons for your staying with us, and the people will be very reluctant to part with you."

"You surely can not leave all your friends and associations here," said Mrs. Goodway, with no slight degree of feeling. "Why, your usefulness in Beulah has only begun, and, as the Doctor says, there are so many reasons for your staying here. If the Excelsior church only knew how well you are getting along here and how much the people are attached to you, they surely wouldn't try to take you away."

"Ah, Hannah," said the Doctor, "that is just what they have found out, and for that reason they have called Mr. Elwood; but we sincerely hope he will not accept."

At this moment it came to Mrs. Goodway's mind, that Mr. Carroll, although not a member of the Presbyterian church, might have an influence in inducing Elwood to refuse the call that none of their own members could have, and then came also the thought that if Elwood should seek Mr. Carroll's advice, his farther acquaintance with Alice might be greatly facilitated, and she felt very certain, at least she hoped, that Alice's influence, if Elwood should once consult her, would be very potent. With these considerations in her mind, just before Elwood took his departure she suggested to him that Mr. Carroll would undoubtedly give him wise counsel, if he were asked for his opinion. It was in her thought to sug-

gest the asking of Alice's opinion also, but she prudently refrained from expressing this.

Elwood made no direct answer to her; but he immediately resolved not to come to a final conclusion in reference to the call from Excelsior, until he had consulted Mr. Carroll, and if the way should be clear, Alice also. His sense of honor toward Allison was not wounded by this determination—he would only seek her opinion in reference to the call he had received—and if the inquiry should touch her feelings in any way, he might be able to judge whether she sustained such a relation to Allison as would forever forbid any manifestation of his feeling towards her.

It is very probable that if it had not been for Mrs. Goodway's suggestion, Elwood would have written to the Excelsior church the next day declining the call; for on going among his people and acquaintances, he found their protests so emphatic that his mind was pretty well made up that it was his duty to remain in Beulah. Very few could see any reason for his leaving his present field at all; and not one did he meet who considered the reasons sufficient to justify his going to Excelsior.

His mind is substantially made up, and only one word of interest in his ministry (this is the utmost he dares to expect!) from a single person will determine his refusal of the call to Excelsior—will she speak it?

In the evening he called at Mr. Carroll's and found him and Alice together in the parlor. How neat and charming seemed her dress; how gracious her air and manner; how brightly shone her eyes in the glare of the lamplight!

He very soon made known the object of his call, and requested Mr. Carroll's opinion as to his duty in the premises, and turning to Alice, said, "I would be glad to have yours also, Miss Carroll."

"If I were to consider only my own wishes and those

of the people of Beulah," was Mr. Carroll's prompt reply, "I would urge you to remain here, but when it comes to a consideration of duty in reference to such a call, the question becomes more complicated and serious.

"It is a very large church, isn't it, father?" asked Alice, with the slightest animation—but Elwood could not interpret her tone.

"I believe it is the oldest church in the city; but I do not know how large a membership it has," he answered, turning an inquiring look toward Elwood.

"I do not know the exact number," the latter responded, "but I think several hundred. They are very much divided at present, however, and it would be a hard task to unite them." And then he recited at some length all that he knew about the troubles in the church, and the consequent resignation of Raymond and his withdrawal from the field, concluding with an expression of his fears, which was not in the least affected, that *he* would not be able to bring peace and harmony to the church again.

He was both pleased and surprised at the attention Alice paid to his narrative; and as soon as he concluded, she said to him:

"They would not have given you a unanimous call, Mr. Elwood, if they were not tired of their strife and contention, and did not desire a minister that would be acceptable to them all. And what a large field of usefulness it will be!"

So clear, so frank, so complimentary—how could he help being thrilled, even though she manifested no interest in the question of his leaving Beulah?

And that "large field of usefulness"—how large, how *bright*, it seemed to him as she spoke!

"The trend of civilization is toward the cities," said Mr. Carroll; "and if successful preachers are called in that direction, we can not blame them for accepting. We

should all be sorry to have you leave Beulah, Mr. Elwood ; but it may be that there is more need for your services in Excelsior than there is here. But do not let me influence your decision ; I have only given you my opinion because you asked for it."

On returning to his room, Elwood wrote a letter to the Excelsior church, stating that their call was receiving his very serious and prayerful consideration, and that he would give them his final answer in a very few days.

CHAPTER XXI.

COUNSEL AND COMFORT.

Elwood earnestly desired the counsel of his friend Allison in reference to the Excelsior call, but for some reason, did not succeed in seeing him until three or four days after Allison's interview with Miss Carroll, described in a previous chapter—and then they casually met on the street.

As soon as they had shaken hands, Elwood made reference to his reception of the call, and was about to proffer his request for Allison's best counsel, when the latter interrupted him by saying: "Yes, yes, I have heard about that, and have been waiting for an opportunity to extend my congratulations!"

"Many thanks for the same, Allison," was the quick reply; "but I need advice much more than 'congratulations,' and I feel certain you will give me that, honestly and faithfully."

"Very well, then, if you must have my 'advice,'" replied Allison, after a short pause, and with a seriousness in his tone that Elwood could not interpret, "come around this evening—we can talk the matter over, anyhow."

When Elwood reached Allison's room in the evening, they sat for a few minutes in perfect silence, each waiting for the other to introduce the topic in question, and each thinking he had never before seen so much reserve on the part of the other!

At length Allison said, with peculiar emphasis:

"Why, Elwood, you don't need any advice from me in reference to that call from Excelsior."

Meeting no reply from Elwood except a look of astonishment, he very soon continued: "Does a railroad train need 'advice' to move along the track, when the steam is on? Do plants and flowers need 'advice' to grow, when the rain has fallen, and the sun is shining on them? Does an oak tree need 'advice' to spread out its branches and lift up its limbs toward the sky?"

Elwood was taken quite aback by this, and could only say: "But, Allison, I am not a railroad train, nor a plant, nor a tree, only——"

"Only a Christian minister," interrupted Allison, with a smile: "at any rate, I will consider you such, even if you do not come in the line of 'Apostolic succession;' but you are subject to the laws and forces of your being, as certainly as are the the railroad train and the oak tree and the growing plant. Wherefore, laying aside all figures of speech, you can not refuse this call, with all the inducements it offers you."

"I hope you don't mean to say that I will go to Excelsior, because I am offered a larger salary there than I am getting here?" answered Elwood, a little impatiently.

"Allison paid no attention to this, but continued very calmly: "The 'inducements' I refer to are the opportunities for growth and usefulness on your part; and because you are honest and disinterested, you must needs be true to yourself and respond to this call—you can hardly do otherwise without stultification."

"I feel," responded Elwood, "that here is a case, perhaps above all others, in which I need divine direction and in which I must not lean on my own understanding—my reason and judgment seem wholly inadequate to a proper decision of the question."

"But the more you apply your 'reason' and 'judg-

ment' and 'understanding' to the case," said Allison, "the more clearly will you see that the 'divine direction' is to Excelsior. Much as I shall regret to see you leave Beulah, I would not dare to put myself in the way, in even the slightest measure, of these plain 'indications of Providence.' As well might the sun refuse to rise to-morrow as for you to refuse the larger duties and responsibilities that this call opens to you."

They were both silent for a few minutes, and then Allison continued: "Do you really want some friendly advice from me, Elwood?"

"It is for that I have come to see you," was the prompt reply.

"I have something to say to you, if you will hear it?" continued Allison, speaking very slowly.

"You know the nature of our friendship; go on."

Allison waited a few minutes, and then looking directly into Elwood's face, said to him: "Before you fully enter upon your work at Excelsior, you ought to marry!"

A sudden peal of thunder could not have given Elwood greater surprise than this utterance of his friend; and Allison's tone was too serious to accuse him of bantering or trifling—but wherefore such 'advice' as this?

"I might retort, Allison, with the proverb, 'Physician, heal thyself'" —Elwood did not catch the peculiar expression of Allison's face at this point—"but since you seem in such earnest on the subject, I will plead my 'youth and inexperience.' At any rate, there will be time enough for me to think of matrimony in the years to come, whether I go to Excelsior or remain here."

But Allison continued in the same slow and serious tone: "Elwood, do you know how great a task is before you at Excelsior? I believe you will be equal to it; but you will need more counsel and help than you have ever needed here. To unite the membership of that church,

and preach to them faithfully and acceptably; to teach the rich that they should respect the poor, and the poor that they should not envy the rich—verily you will have a task that will tax your powers of intellect and soul to the ut——”

“That is, if I go there?” interrupted Elwood, with a smile.

“I feel very safe in my assumption that you will go to this larger field, that is, if I know the man I am talking to; and you will find ‘issues’ and difficulties there, of which you have never dreamed in Beulah.” And then, in a warmer tone, but still calm and self-possessed, Allison continued: “But, Elwood, you must do more than *satisfy* these people—you must SURPRISE them; you must prove yourself a much greater man and greater preacher than they have taken you to be; you must manifest such ability and such excellence of character before them, that they will forget all their discords and differences in love for you and appreciation of your ministry.”

“Don’t set so high a mark before me, I beg you, Allison,” interposed Elwood; “I am not Beecher, or Spurgeon, or Wesley, or Whitfield.”

“Neither would I have you strive to be one of these,” said Allison; “rather be yourself—I mean your highest and best self. But, on this point, let me read you an extract from the ‘sage of Concord’”—and taking down a volume of Emerson from its place on the shelf, he read from the address before the Cambridge divinity students in 1838:

“ ‘Yourself a new-born bard of the Holy Ghost, cast ‘behind you all conformity, and acquaint men at first hand ‘with Deity. Look to it first and only, that fashion, ‘custom, authority, pleasure and money are nothing to ‘you—are not bandages before your eyes that you can not ‘see—but live with the privilege of the immeasurable ‘mind. Not too anxious to visit periodically all families

'and each family in your parish connection, when you 'meet any of these men or women, be to them a divine 'man! be to them thought and virtue; let their timid 'aspirations find in you a friend; let their trampled 'instincts be genially tempted out in your atmosphere; let 'their doubts know that you have doubted, and their wonder feel that you have wondered. * * * Discharge 'to men the priestly office, and, present or absent, you 'will be followed by their love, as by an angel!'"

"That is worth taking into my memory," said Elwood, with some animation, "even if Emerson is not considered a representative of orthodoxy."

"And your use of the term 'orthodoxy' brings me to what, by your leave, I will call the second point of my discourse," resumed Allison—"but haven't I already given you more 'advice' than you bargained for?"

"No, no," said Elwood, with some eagerness, "I want to hear you through."

"As soon as you spoke the word 'orthodoxy,' I was reminded that you had already begun to wrestle with the Confession of Faith, and I believe you have disposed of one chapter, as far, perhaps, as it is possible to dispose of it; but whether you will believe me or not, you will have more serious doubts concerning the doctrines of your church than any you have yet encountered or even imagined."

"'Doubts?'" responded Elwood, very earnestly; "if I should ever doubt the fundamental truths of Christianity, I would quit preaching immediately!"

"That all sounds very well," calmly replied Allison; "but your doubts may not take that particular shape, or any other shape that you might now expect. I know not whether your difficulty will be with 'eternal punishment,' or 'total depravity,' or 'miracles, or 'inspiration,' or some other hard problem; but you can not escape the

theological investigation and speculation of the day—it is in the air!”

“What would you have me do with my doubts, if they *must* come? How shall I get rid of them?” asked Elwood, a little nervously.

“You can not get rid of them,” was the quick response; “you must master them—you must find some way to solve the various questions they present to you. It will be no easy matter for you to do this, at the same time preserving a good conscience and exercising all the functions of a Presbyterian minister; and it is because I foresee these theological difficulties in your way, as well as many practical ones, that I have taken the liberty to urge the subject of matrimony upon your attention—believe me you will need help!”

“The value of the ‘help’ would depend very much on the person I might marry, would it not?—if we are to enter upon a serious discussion of the matter,” responded Elwood, in a rather light tone.

“Very true,” said Allison, without any relaxation of his seriousness; “you should not marry a woman who will increase your difficulties by opposition or indifference, nor yet one who will approve all your acts, whether they be wise or otherwise; but you should seek a woman who will be intensely interested in every thing pertaining to your professional work, and will love your ministry more than she loves her own life—one whose judgment will be an unfailing reliance, and whose insight and intuition will be a well-nigh infallible guide—one whose sense of right and truth will enable you to triumph over all doubts and misgivings and fears—in short, a woman who will be thought of your thought, heart of your heart, and life of your life!”

“A very high ideal you furnish me,” said Elwood, with a perceptible tremor in his voice—how could he help

thinking of Miss Carroll all the while Allison was speaking!

“Yes,” said Allison—and now *his* voice began to tremble, but he faltered not—“and I can point you to the woman who can even more than fill it; and you can win her, if any one can—I mean Alice Carroll!”

Elwood could only open his eyes upon his friend in utter astonishment; but Allison maintained his perfect equanimity, and after waiting a few minutes for Elwood to recover from his “shock,” proceeded: “I mean it all, and speak it out of the abundance of my friendship for you—can you believe this?”

“But, Allison, I have always supposed that you——”

“Was desperately in love with her myself, no doubt you were going to say,” interrupted Allison; “but however correct you might have been, I know that she has no interest in me beyond sincere friendship; and both for her sake and for yours, I would rejoice to see you win her love—that I may pronounce you husband and wife before you leave Beulah, or as soon thereafter as practicable.”

Whatever feeling of pleasure Elwood may have allowed himself on account of this revelation, he did not fail to notice the signs of an intense mental strain in his friend’s face, and, notwithstanding the extreme delicacy of the situation, he could not refrain from expressing his sympathy for Allison’s pain and his appreciation of his noble and disinterested friendship.

And with a cordial shaking of hands they separated, Allison greatly relieved, and Elwood—having maintained his loyalty to his friend without spot or tarnish—now thrilling with hope and expectation.

He could at least launch his ship upon the sea!

CHAPTER XXII.

PLOTTING AND PLANNING.

"Alice," said Clara Martin, as the two young women were seated in the house of the former one Tuesday afternoon a week or two after the events recorded in the two previous chapters, "my father has been in Beulah three years as pastor, and four years as presiding elder, and in a few weeks more his term will expire and then we will have to leave the place. It makes me feel very sad. I have had so many happy days at Beulah, and so many—it would be ungrateful in me to say so many unhappy—ones; but you know how much I have suffered."

"I don't suppose I can *fully* realize it, Clara. The Bible says, 'Each heart knoweth its own bitterness;' and I presume none of us can express all that we suffer even to our dearest friends."

"Have you ever heard anything about Mr. Vernon?" asked Clara, with the very slightest tenderness in her tone.

"Nothing except that father told me the other day, that he is a practicing physician in Excelsior and is unmarried."

"I have heard that myself," Clara replied; "and wondered whether it was selfish or wicked in me to feel glad that he had married no one else."

"It was at least *natural* for you to feel so, Clara," answered Alice, with a smile.

"And still I ought not to feel unwilling that he should enjoy the happiness of married life, especially since

it has been so long since our engagement was broken—and I have never even seen him since he left College.” Then, after a pause of several minutes, Clara continued: “Alice, I have often thought, from the way you spoke at the time, that if you had been in my place, you wouldn’t have broken the engagement—at least not as quickly as I did.”

“No girl can tell just what she would do in such a case,” Alice answered, with some color in her face, “but I am sure you did just what you thought was right, and feeling as you did, I don’t see how you could have done otherwise.”

“I suppose it was the Lord’s will and all for the best,” said Clara, with an effort to assume a more cheerful tone. “I always felt that if I married at all, it must be to a minister, so I could share in his labors as far as possible. If Mr. Vernon had only—” and in spite of her efforts to restrain them, a few tears forced themselves into her eyes.

“I certainly sympathize with you, Clara; there couldn’t be a worthier ambition for any woman than to be married to a faithful and devoted preacher.”

“That is just what I thought,” replied Clara, “but the Lord seems to have directed otherwise; and the question I am now asking myself is what other work he would have me do.”

“Why, Clara, haven’t you been doing all that you can do? You are assistant superintendent of your Sunday School and president of the Woman’s Temperance Society; and you take an active part in your class-meetings and the other services of your church, besides doing so much for the poor and distressed of our village.”

“Alice,” said Clara, in a voice full of deepest feeling, “poor Maud Ingalls’ death has made me feel sadder than anything that ever happened in my experience—yes, it has made me feel sadder than all my own trouble. You

remember how merry and lively she was when we went to school together, and how she used to make us all laugh with her pranks and mischief. And she was just as pure and innocent then as we were! She was one of the last girls I would have expected to go astray."

"I have read of such cases in the papers," responded Alice; "but this is the first one that ever came so near home. I am very glad we went to see her, Clara, and did what we could to comfort her and her parents. How badly they felt, and how grateful they were to us. A few women among my acquaintances have expressed their surprise that we should do anything for such a degraded creature; but I believe we did right, and I do not regret it."

"Didn't you think, Alice, that Mr. Elwood's prayer and remarks at the funeral were very appropriate?"

"Yes, Clara, very appropriate," Alice replied, with a little more emphasis in her mind than she cared to manifest in her voice.

"Since Maud came home," said Clara, "I have been reading in the papers something about the great temptations that young girls, especially poor girls, have to encounter in all large cities, and how many wicked devices there are to deceive them and rob them of their innocence and virtue. O, it's terrible, it's terrible, and scarcely any effort is made to save them! There are temperance societies and a great many other organizations to save the boys and young men; but almost the only thing that is done for the great army of unprotected girls is to neglect them in their struggles for a livelihood and despise and hate them after they have fallen. Everybody—and I fear our own sex are much harder in their judgment than men are—wants to stone them to death, no matter how much wrong and injustice they may have suffered. How I wish I could do something for them!"

"Clara," said Alice, "if it should be your duty to

do any work of this kind, the Lord will surely open the way—we can only wait for the manifestation of his will in all that concerns the work of our lives.”

At this point the door bell rang, and on Alice's opening the door, in response to her invitation, entered Mrs. Goodway.

She just came, she said, to borrow one of George Eliot's novels, which Alice had promised to loan her; but she did not decline the request to be seated awhile.

“We were talking about Maud Ingalls just before you came in,” said Clara; “how sad her case was—you remember she was once a schoolmate of ours?”

“I had forgotten that,” Mrs. Goodway responded; “but I was glad you both went to see her before she died, whether she deserved your kindness or not.”

“However bad she may have been,” said Alice, “she was utterly wretched and heart-broken when we saw her, and she told us that we spoke the first kind words to her that she had heard for a long, long time!”

“And I was also glad,” said Mrs. Goodway, “that Mr. Elwood attended her funeral. I have heard that his remarks were very beautiful and appropriate in every respect.”

“So they were,” said Clara, “Mr. Elwood always speaks very appropriately, and,” turning her eyes toward Alice, “very eloquently.”

Which remarks concerning Elwood Alice took no pains to dispute!

After a pause of two or three minutes, Mrs. Goodway continued: “Alice, has Mr. Elwood asked your father's advice about leaving Beulah—you have heard that he has received a call to Excelsior?”

She watched the girl's face very closely for some manifestation of feeling about Elwood's leaving the village, but could catch none. Alice simply said: “He was here

a few evenings since and talked to father about it awhile."

"Your father urged him to stay in Beulah, didn't he?" was the next inquiry.

"He said he would be very sorry to have him leave Beulah—but, of course, he wouldn't want to offer any opinion conflicting with Mr. Elwood's plans or his ideas of duty."

"We are all very anxious to have him decline the call to Excelsior and continue his ministry with us;" said Mrs. Goodway with some earnestness; "and I sincerely hope your father will try to influence him to that decision."

"I do not wonder that you are anxious to have Mr. Elwood remain with you," said Clara, "his ministry has been so acceptable."

"It certainly has," said Alice in her usual clear tone; "and it is very natural that his people should be reluctant to see him leave for even such a field as he would have at Excelsior."

Which remark, as interpreted by Mrs. Goodway, raised her hope very high, that Alice's influence might be sufficient to prevent Elwood's leaving Beulah—if they were only better acquainted with each other!

Something must be done to this end at once; and, after making some allusion to their Wednesday night prayer meetings and asking Clara a few questions about the meetings of the Methodist church—she was justified in throwing Alice off her guard in this way, wasn't she?—she said, in a very casual manner: "Alice, if you will stop on your way home to-morrow night, I will let you have 'Ben Hur.' I have only a few more pages to read, and will finish the book to-morrow."

"Thanks," said the unsuspecting Alice, "I will do so, as I am anxious to read the book;" and then Mrs. Goodway took her departure, leaving Alice and Clara to finish their conference.

In the course of the evening the good woman said to her husband: "Josiah, I have a very urgent request to make of you; and you must not refuse me. I want you to ask Mr. Elwood in after prayer-meeting to-morrow night."

"What, Hannah!" he answered, in no small degree of surprise.

"I am only asking you to do what you have frequently done before," she answered. "You asked him in last Wednesday night and talked to him an hour or two after he came—and I only want you to talk with him a few minutes to-morrow night! All I want is to have him meet Alice Carroll here; and he can not avoid offering to accompany her home. I have requested her to stop, and she hasn't the least idea of my object."

To do Mrs. Goodway justice, she would not have devised this "scheme," innocent as it was, merely to further an acquaintance between Elwood and Alice. She was intensely in earnest in her desire to prevent Elwood's leaving Beulah; and she felt very hopeful that if Alice's influence to that end could be secured, it would be very effective with him.

"But Elwood will surely suspect—" protested the Doctor.

"Why should he?" she responded, "when it is only what you have done nearly every Wednesday night for several weeks past—only you must be *sure* to do it to-morrow night. We must do everything we can to keep Mr. Elwood in Beulah, Josiah."

This last argument had its designed effect upon the Doctor, and he promised to do as she asked.

There was a large attendance at the prayer-meeting; and Elwood thought that Alice paid closer attention to his remarks than usual—and was not her singing both clearer

and sweeter since he had learned that Allison had no claim upon her interest and affection?

Elwood lingered a few minutes to shake hands with the people, and then started homeward side by side with Dr. Goodway.

The Doctor's house was between two and three squares from the church; and all the time they were walking that distance he revolved in his mind the question how he could induce Elwood to go in, if the simple invitation were not sufficient. One pretense after another was considered and rejected; and Mrs. Goodway's high hopes might have been doomed to disappointment, if Elwood had not happened to think of a volume of Macaulay's Essays that he wished to borrow from the Doctor. On his so expressing himself, the latter answered, with a readiness that Elwood wondered at: "Certainly, certainly, Mr. Elwood, I can get it for you without the least trouble—walk in!"

By taking more time than was necessary to find "Ben Hur" and introducing various topics of conversation, not overlooking the exercises at the prayer-meeting, Mrs. Goodway had prevented Alice's departure; and as soon as the Doctor and Elwood entered, the latter was requested to be seated until the volume of Macaulay could be procured. The Doctor immediately took a light and went to the library for the book, and, after searching a few minutes in vain, called Mrs. Goodway to his aid, in spite of Elwood's protests that he could call for it some other time.

This was no part of Mrs. Goodway's plan, and she and the Doctor presently returned to the sitting-room, expressing their regrets that it could not be found.

In a few moments Alice arose to depart; and as Mrs. Goodway had calculated, Elwood offered himself as an escort to her home.

In response to her gracious invitation when they reached her door, he entered the house and spent half an hour in her company.

It was only half an hour; but it was long enough for him to recover from the peculiar embarrassment and self-consciousness that he felt as soon as they were first seated in the room alone; long enough for him to express some appreciation of the value of her presence at his prayer-meetings; long enough for him to secure her company for a lecture of John B. Gough on "Orators and Oratory," which was to be delivered in the village a few days hence.

They are "getting acquainted" as rapidly as you could desire, Mrs. Goodway—but Alice's vision reaches far away from Beulah!

CHAPTER XXIII.

"PROGRESS AND POVERTY."

The city of Excelsior was only about one hundred miles from Beulah; and although Elwood had visited the place, perhaps half a dozen times in his life, he had no personal acquaintance with the membership of the church to which he had been called, except that he had met two or three of its elders during the sessions of the Synod of X—— since he became a minister.

His sense of responsibility and his desire to reach a proper conclusion were so great, that, without consulting any of his friends, he resolved to make a trip to the place, and spend two or three days looking over the field, that he might understand the situation more clearly.

Taking the early morning train, he arrived at Excelsior a little before noon, and ordered the hack driver to convey him to Dr. Vernon's office, which he learned was located in the central part of the city.

He was met at the door by an attendant, who informed him that the Doctor had gone into the country to visit a patient, and would not return till the latter part of the afternoon.

Elwood was disappointed at this information, as he desired to talk with Vernon awhile before introducing himself to any of the officials or members of the church; but, after a few moments' reflection, he resolved to improve the time by taking a drive around the city, that he might get some idea of its size and growth.

But he first stepped into a restaurant near by to procure a lunch, as he did not wish to take time for dinner at a hotel.

While partaking of this, he said to the waiter, who seemed to be an unusually talkative fellow: "Do you know Dr. Vernon, whose office is only a few doors from your place?"

"I should say I do," was the prompt reply; "he frequently lunches here, although his regular boarding place is in another part of the city."

"Has he a very large practice?" was Elwood's next inquiry.

"I should say so," replied the waiter, very emphatically; "he's going nearly all the time. It makes no difference where people live, nor how poor they are; and he spends all he makes in buying medicine and other things for the poor families that he visits. I have often known him to buy a basketful of provisions here before going to see some poor sick devils down in 'Egypt,' and take them along with him in his buggy."

"Egypt?" responded Elwood, in a manner that caused the waiter to eye him very closely. "Where's that?"

"O, you're not acquainted in Excelsior?" asked the waiter. "Well, you will find out enough about 'Egypt,' before you are in the city long, if you are going to stay here—eh?"

No response to this; but the waiter knew he had Elwood's ear, and therefore proceeded: "There's lots of people living down there, but the Lord only knows *how* they live. But they say old Simpkinson gets his rents out of them all the same; and if they don't pay up, he turns them into the street without much ceremony. You're not acquainted with Simpkinson, I reckon?"

"No, I am not, but I have heard of him," was the

rather quick reply; for, notwithstanding the interest that Elwood had manifested in reference to "Egypt," he was exercising the great American privilege of eating in a hurry, and he now wanted to bring the conversation to a close—so he added, "I have no particular acquaintance with any one living in the city, except Dr. Vernon; what is the amount of my bill?"

But the waiter faithfully improved the time occupied in changing the bill by responding: "Well, Simpkinson is one of the deacons, or elders, of the First Presbyterian church"—at this point the speaker noticed a renewed and greatly increased interest on Elwood's part—"and, Lord, how he squeezes the rent out of his tenants!"

"I was expecting to take a ride around the city this afternoon," said Elwood, "and perhaps I will strike the locality you call 'Egypt.'"

"You can easily find it," replied the waiter, greatly pleased that he had secured such a response from his auditor; "go south on Grand Avenue (anybody will tell you where to find Grand Avenue), as far as Shoddy street; then go west till you cross the railroad track, and you can see 'Egypt' for yourself—you won't want to stay there long, however!"

And again Elwood's interest was aroused to such an extent as to cause the inquiry whether Deacon Simpkinson owned all the buildings in the locality.

"Pretty much all of them," was the quick response; "but you won't find Simpkinson himself down there. His office is at 249 Toney street. He knows how to talk slick and pious—but if you have any dealings with him, you must be devilish careful, or he'll skin you alive!"

The glib waiter would probably have sought to occupy his listener's attention for a much longer time; but another customer claimed his attention, and Elwood was released,

with the reminder that he would have no trouble to find "Egypt!"

Is there not an "Egypt," more or less conspicuous, more or less dark, in every great city of the world?

Procuring a horse and buggy at the nearest livery stable, Elwood drove around the State House Square, admiring the massive structures and other signs of progress and prosperity that everywhere met his eye. He first thought that a few hours' drive would give him at least a superficial view of the entire city; but he soon found so much "extension" and "improvement" in every direction that he despaired of even this; and after spending an hour or two in viewing the central portions of it, he at length turned down Grand Avenue, and after surveying pretty closely the fine dwellings on either side for a mile or more, he turned westward on Shoddy street, and continued his course until he crossed the railroad track and came in full sight of "Egypt."

He saw no such large, many-storied tenements as had become quite familiar to his eyes in New York and Brooklyn, nor such *swarms* of ragged and haggard creatures on the streets; but he still saw enough, without alighting from his buggy or questioning a single soul, to realize that on these streets and within these buildings there was great poverty, great suffering, and great degradation. Something caused him to check the speed of his horse and drive very slowly around this "Egypt," giving close attention to every building and every man or woman or child on the streets; and the contrast between this part of the city and the parts that he had seen was most vividly and painfully impressed upon his consciousness.

The gulf between the rich and the poor never seemed so wide and so deep to him before.

"Did Christ die for these poor creatures as well as for those who live in the fine mansions on Grand Ave-

nue?" he asked himself, as he crossed the railroad track on his return.

He drove back by a less direct route than Grand Avenue; but it was one on which he found very many signs of the activity and enterprise for which Excelsior was so noted; and after returning the horse and buggy to the livery stable, he went again to Vernon's office. This time Vernon was in; and it would have been very difficult to tell which one of the two derived the greater pleasure from the meeting.

"I felt certain you would come, Elwood," was Vernon's exclamation as soon as their greeting was over. "I told them you would not refuse their call, if it were unanimous; but you will have hard work to satisfy them."

"I have not accepted the call yet," answered Elwood; "and am only here to look over the ground and see what my duty is."

"You will find Excelsior full of life and enterprise," was Vernon's response. "The very atmosphere is stimulating, and there are some very good people here, and some—"

"Not so good, I suppose you were going to say," answered Elwood.

"You may leave it at that, if you wish, although I might have used still stronger terms," answered Vernon, with a slight bitterness; "but when did you get here?"

Then Elwood related his experience since calling at Vernon's office, giving a somewhat detailed account of his visit to "Egypt" and his observations there.

"What sent you to that part of the city?" asked Vernon. "The people down there have no use for a preacher, but they often call for a doctor. But, Elwood, you haven't dined yet. You must stay with me over night, and to-morrow I will introduce you to some of the

leading members of the church, so they can see the kind of preacher they have called."

They were soon on their way to Vernon's hotel, and after dining, they repaired to his rooms on the second floor and sat down for an evening's conversation together.

"I am glad to see you so prosperous in your profession, Vernon," said Elwood; "you seem to have all the practice any one could wish to have."

"I have all the patients I want, I can assure you," was the rather cold reply, "and more than I can do justice to. A great many of my patients need other things much more than they need medicine, with which I would gladly supply them if I were able; and many of them die for lack of proper nursing and care. As for myself, I enjoy life as well as any 'lone and lorn' fellow of my age could expect; but it pains me greatly to see so much sickness and misery that I can not relieve. I suppose it always will be so? What do *you* think about that?"

"I don't like to look at it in that way. I still hope for that coming of the kingdom of Christ, when the miseries of extreme poverty and destitution shall cease, and there shall be such a distribution of the products of the earth that no one shall suffer serious want, unless it be by his own fault." But the impressions Elwood had received during the afternoon greatly qualified the assurance of tone that he tried to assume, and then he added: "But I wouldn't think it possible there should be so much destitution in a city no larger than Excelsior."

"New York is not the only place to look for these things, Elwood, as you will find before you have been here long," Vernon responded slowly. "'Progress and Poverty' seem to go hand in hand the world over; and in order that some may be rich and prosperous, it seems necessary that others should be very poor—if not very wretched. But to change the subject, Elwood, tell me

about the people at Beulah. Is the College still flourishing?"

A full half hour was occupied by Elwood in answering Vernon upon these points, Vernon interjecting a number of inquiries in reference to persons he had known during his College days; and at length he asked if Clara Martin were still there.

"She is"—but before Elwood could say anything farther there was a knock at the door, and a boy not yet in his teens, on being admitted, inquired for the Doctor.

It was a call from "Egypt;" his father was very sick, and his mother was anxious to have something done for him right away.

"Tell her I will be there very soon," Vernon said to the little fellow, "and here is a ticket to pay your fare home on the street car."

"Elwood went with him in his buggy, and as soon as they reached the house, Vernon said, "Will you go in with me, or would you prefer to stay in the buggy?"

"I prefer to go in," said Elwood, with a certain degree of positiveness.

The man was quite sick with an attack of intermittent fever; and the wife and four small children, besides the boy heretofore introduced, were in positive lack of sufficient food, saying nothing concerning the quality of what they had.

Vernon prepared the medicine he thought proper for the case, and handed the woman a small sum of money to purchase some food for her children.

"Doctor, you are very kind," said Mrs. Watkins, "and I fear we shall never be able to repay you. I was so afraid my husband was going to die, and we haven't got last month's rent paid, and Mr. Simpkinson—"

"I'll see Mr. Simpkinson to-morrow," interrupted Vernon, "and ask him to wait till your husband is able to

work ; but, Mrs. Watkins, I should have introduced my friend, Mr. Elwood, to you. He is the minister they are trying to get at the First Presbyterian church in place of Mr. Raymond."

Mrs. Watkins bowed to Elwood, and then said, "Indeed, Mr. Raymond was a very good man, and he tried hard to have all the poor people attend the church, as well as the rich ones. He used to come and see us, and we both went a few times, (we had better clothes then than we have now, Doctor); and we were going to join the church, but we heard that Mr. Simpkinson and others had said they didn't want poor people in that church, and my husband wouldn't go any more; and we've had such bad luck of late, that we can not even send the children to the Mission Sunday School; but if my husband only gets well again, I think we will get along."

"His case is not at all dangerous, Mrs. Watkins, and I think he will be up in a few days," was the very comforting assurance with which Vernon took his leave.

"Have you many such cases?" asked Elwood, as soon as they were again seated in the buggy.

"Something of the kind nearly every day," was the reply; "I wish I could relieve them all; but it is impossible."

They drove back to the hotel in comparative silence, and soon after they reached Vernon's rooms, he said: "Elwood, I was asking you about Clara Martin when that boy came in. I believe you said she was still in Beulah?"

"Yes, that is the case, Vernon, but I believe her father will be sent to another appointment at the next conference."

"Then, she is not married?" said Vernon, with a slight appearance of relief in his manner. "I wonder if she ever thinks of me." Then more seriously, "It had to be so; it had to be so."

Elwood made no reply to this except a look of sincere sympathy, which Vernon appreciated more highly than any words that his friend might have uttered. Vernon's face assumed a lighter aspect as he said: "But how are *you* getting along in respect to matrimony? Are you in love or engaged?"

"Don't be curious, Vernon; all I can say to you is that I am not engaged."

"Well, well," answered Vernon, "I can give no prescription for love-sickness, if you have it, except hard work."

Elwood smiled at this, and not wishing to reveal his feelings towards Alice Carroll at that time, even to Vernon, he turned the conversation into inquiries about the growth of the city and the affairs of the First Presbyterian church, which continued till nearly midnight, and then the two friends retired to rest.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WEALTH AND WORTH.

The next morning, as soon as they had eaten breakfast, Vernon offered his services in introducing Elwood to some of the leading members of the church, stating that they would go to Deacon Simpkinson's first, as he wished to talk with him about the Watkins family.

"Is he very hard and exacting with his tenants in all cases?" asked Elwood.

"He likes to have them pay their rents, and pay promptly; but you can judge for yourself when you see how he answers me," was Vernon's reply. "Another reason why I want you to see him first is that he was the first man that spoke to me about you; and you will find him very much interested in all the affairs of the church. After we see Simpkinson I will take you to Major Collins' store and introduce you to him."

A short drive brought them to Simpkinson's office; and on entering it they beheld a clean-shaven, bald-headed man of about sixty years, very busy with papers and accounts; for Simpkinson was one of those thorough business men who like to keep their own books and handle and count their own money. Besides the tenement houses in "Egypt," he owned quite a number of business blocks in the heart of the city; and he gave his personal attention to the collection of the rents for all these and to the investment of the money in additional real estate as fast as it came in.

"This is Mr. Elwood, Mr. Simpkinson, whom you have called to be your pastor," said Vernon, as he presented Elwood to Simpkinson.

The latter rose from his desk and shook hands with Elwood quite warmly, surveying him the while from head to foot; and although he said nothing on that point, feeling well satisfied with the looks and appearance of the young preacher before him.

"I am heartily glad to see you, Mr. Elwood," he said as soon as the three men were all seated in Simpkinson's private office—Vernon and Elwood were accorded a privilege not enjoyed by many of Simpkinson's callers—"and I hope you have concluded to accept the call of our church. We are anxious to have a faithful servant of Christ to watch over us and build up his cause in our growing city, and we have sought you for our pastor because we all believe you to be that kind of a man."

As Elwood made no immediate reply, he very presently continued: "We are now like sheep without a shepherd, very much scattered, very much scattered, and therefore we are all praying that you will decide to become our minister. We also think"—he wanted to apply every consideration to Elwood's mind that could have any possible influence—"that the salary offered is very liberal, and you can easily see how rapidly the city is growing."

"I am giving your call very serious and prayerful consideration; and I trust I shall come to a right conclusion," was the only reply Elwood gave him.

"That is likewise our desire," said Simpkinson, in the same smooth tone as before; "and how do you like the appearance of our city?"

"Very much, indeed," said Elwood—for the moment he thought nothing of "Egypt"—"I have been much surprised at the activity and enterprise I have seen on

every hand. I had no idea I should see so much growth and improvement."

"It is wonderful how the city increases in wealth and population," said Simpkinson, very smilingly; and then looking serious again, "how I wish the cause of Christ could be advanced in the same proportion."

"You remember I told you you would make no mistake if you called Mr. Elwood," said Vernon, in a *soothing* tone that quite surprised Elwood; but Vernon knew the man he was talking to, and he wanted to prepare Simpkinson's mind for the favor he was going to ask.

"And I am well satisfied we have made none; in fact, I told our people we could not find a preacher with a better reputation than Mr. Elwood," said Simpkinson, in a tone of self-satisfaction that was almost ludicrous, and then he again eyed Elwood closely.

Elwood was considerably embarrassed by this ordeal, as well as by Vernon's and Simpkinson's utterances concerning himself, but there was no escape for him!

And now it was time for Vernon to speak to Simpkinson concerning the Watkins family.

"Mr. Simpkinson," he said, "I promised Mrs. Watkins, the wife of one of your tenants in the lower part of the city, that I would call to see you to-day about their rent."

"Ah, Watkins, Myron Watkins; they occupy rooms 25 and 26, No. 499 Claiborne street," said Simpkinson, turning to his cash-book to enter the amount of rent as soon as Vernon should hand it to him.

"Watkins is quite sick; but I think he will be up and able to work in a few days; I prescribed for him last night," said Vernon.

"Ah," said Simpkinson again, and with a shade of disappointment in his face, "they have been very slow, and I have indulged them a number of times."

"Mrs. Watkins says they will pay you as soon as her husband is able to work," continued Vernon, with considerable earnestness, "and I promised to call and ask you to wait on them."

"Well, Doctor," said Simpkinson, assuming a rather meek tone, "It is impossible for me to give my personal attention to these matters; but if you have investigated this case and are satisfied this family is worthy of my indulgence, I will wait on them till Watkins is able to work again. Such matters are very annoying, very annoying, but"—turning to Elwood—"we all have our crosses to bear in this world, and we must learn to bear them without complaint."

As Elwood and Vernon rose to depart, he again addressed the former: "You will attend our prayer-meeting to-night? The people will all be glad to meet you, and it will be an excellent opportunity for you to form their acquaintance. I would ask you to stay at my house, but Mrs. Simpkinson is out of the city, and it would be impossible to entertain you properly."

"I will see that he is cared for," said Vernon.

"That is one of your members," said Vernon, as soon as they were seated in the buggy again; "but they are not all like him."

"Are many of them as rich as he is?" asked Elwood.

"There are many of them very well off and living in high style; but if you can get along with Simpkinson, you can with any of them. He will nearly always do what I request in reference to his tenants; but I am careful not to ask too much of him; and I generally contrive to speak a word of praise, (never very decided, however,) or give him an opportunity to praise himself, before I present my request. He always wants me to vouch that they are 'worthy;' which never troubles me much, as there are precious few of them who are not worthy of any indulgence

he will give them. Still, he will sometimes wait several months ; and occasionally, if he considers a tenant 'very worthy,' he will throw off a few dollars altogether ; but he always expects such a one to be very grateful to him in return."

[Do not conclude, Henry, because you find Simpkinson possessed of so much wealth and Vernon of so much worth, that these two things are always separated ; for perchance the next man you meet is possessed of both wealth and worth.]

The interview with Simpkinson lasted much longer than Vernon had contemplated, and just before they reached Collins' store he said to Elwood: "I can only take time to introduce you to Collins, as I have several patients to see to-day. He is one of the best men in the city and is very popular with all the members of the church. He will introduce you to other members, and will probably invite you to stay with him over night ; and if Mrs. Collins consents to entertain you, as I have no doubt she will, she will do it in good form and style ; but here comes Collins to the door—I will introduce you at once."

The ceremony of introduction was very soon accomplished, and after explaining the extent of his professional duties, Vernon left Elwood with Major Collins for the day. The Major, although full of good nature, was a man of thorough business capacity. All his clerks, both male and female, attended to their duties with pleasure and enthusiasm ; and everything about the management of the mammoth store was characterized by facility and order. As the two men walked from the door to the office in the rear end of the building, Collins spoke a kindly word to each one of the clerks and introduced "Mr. Elwood, our minister," to them, not giving Elwood time to explain that he had not accepted such a relation.

The fact is, that without any such scrutiny as Simp-

kinson had employed, Collins was so highly pleased with Elwood, that he at once assumed the acceptance of the church's call by the latter, and took it for granted that he had come to Excelsior to make arrangements for entering upon his work.

"Our church has been badly torn up with strife and contention," he said, "and it is high time we were becoming harmonious again. You will preach for us next Sunday?"

All this was uttered with such force and heartiness that Elwood was restrained from explaining that the call was still a subject of consideration with him, and only said: "I can not possibly preach for you next Sunday, but I promised Mr. Simpkinson to attend the prayer meeting to-night, I have only come over to examine the field and—"

"Of course," said Collins, "you would want to visit the city and get acquainted with the people before commencing your work. Have you met any of the people yet?"

"None but Mr. Simpkinson," was the answer, "I spent an hour or two with him this morning."

"You've seen Simpkinson," said Collins with a smile, "then I need not introduce you to him. I must take you around to see some of the other members; but I must first do a little writing—if you will excuse me."

He went to his desk and wrote a brief note to his wife, informing her that "Mr. Elwood, our minister," was in town, and that if agreeable to her he would be happy to entertain him over night.

Looking it over it to see that it was all in due form, he called a cash boy to his side and in an undertone directed him to take it to Mrs. Collins and bring back her reply as quickly as possible.

He had a house of over twenty richly furnished rooms

and half a dozen well trained "servants;" but he understood the situation too clearly to offer his hospitality to Elwood without first consulting the mistress of the establishment and receiving her formal consent.

During the boy's absence, which was something less than half an hour, Collins found no difficulty in excusing himself for the delay in starting out, on account of some other business matters; and when the reply came to his note, it was as follows:

"JOSHUA:

"We shall be very happy to entertain Mr. Elwood. Dinner promptly at six o'clock.
ELIZABETH."

The horse and buggy being ready in front of the store, the two men immediately started on their errand.

"You will stay at my house over night?" inquired Collins as soon as they were comfortably seated; "Mrs. Collins, I am certain, will be pleased to have you do so."

"I will unless Vernon insists on my staying with him," was the prompt reply, which was very satisfactory to Collins, as he felt certain he could dispose of all the objections Vernon might offer.

The task of introducing "Mr. Elwood, our minister," to the members of the church and other citizens was prosecuted by Collins with his accustomed facility and energy. He moved from store to store, from office to office, from house to house and from street to street, with a rapidity that utterly surprised Elwood; and yet there was no bluster, no impatience, no hurry. Rich and poor, churchmen and non-churchmen, were alike called on, and they all seemed to appreciate the attention they were receiving; for Collins' abounding good nature had its effect upon all whom they met, and he had the satisfaction of noticing that Elwood made a very favorable impression wherever they went.

A number of times Elwood essayed to explain to Collins that he had not yet decided to accept the call that he had received ; but the latter had so much to say about the affairs of the church, every topic being presented to Elwood as if he were already installed as pastor, that he found it impossible to say what he wished, and gradually his ears became so accustomed to the phrase that it had no particular effect upon him.

Are we not often prepared for our future in some such way as this?

About the middle of the afternoon they met Vernon, and Collins immediately said to him : “ Mr. Elwood will stay with me over night, Doctor.”

“ You will call at my office before you leave to-morrow, won't you Elwood ? ” said Vernon, in a tone of earnestness that Elwood could not quite understand.

The entire day, except the half hour they took for lunch, was occupied in these calls without any weariness on the part of either, until Collins' well-disciplined memory reminded him that it was *nearly* six o'clock ; and he promptly turned toward his own house, although he told Elwood there were several other families that he knew “ would be glad to see their minister.”

CHAPTER XXV.

POWER AND PRECISION.

They were seated but a few minutes in Collins' drawing-room, when with distinct step and rustling train, Mrs. Collins made her entrance.

"This is Mr. Elwood, our minister, Mrs. Collins," said Collins, with a reserve that contrasted very strangely, to Elwood's ear, with the tone in which he had been introduced to other people during the day.

Mrs. Collins extended her hand to Elwood, the rustle of her skirts making its due impression on his ear, as she expressed her pleasure at meeting him.

Next, the six children, of whom the oldest was Fred, a youth of sixteen, and the youngest were twin girls of about two years, named Lulu and Lucy, were duly presented, and each one received due recognition from Elwood. He had not yet learned all that was to be learned about the manifestation of sympathy and friendship for the little folks, but it was a lesson he had not wholly neglected during his ministry at Beulah. They all knew how to extend their hands and what poise and posture of body to assume, when to speak, and when to be silent, in the presence of company. No disobedience, no rudeness, no impoliteness—at least while the mother's eye was upon them! Even the twin babies cooed and cried with seeming method and precision.

But not until they sat down at the dining table was Mrs. Collins full power and authority revealed. If there

had been a crown on her head and a scepter in her right hand, she could hardly have been more absolute in her sway over husband, children and the waiters in attendance. The children knew exactly how to handle knife, fork and spoon; and the slightest departure from the most approved form or style was promptly corrected by the mother's eye—she had only to look!

Collins seemed to be making constant effort to relieve himself of the restraint that was on him, by addressing some light and playful remark to the children; but her eye would seek him out too, and he felt its force and effect. Two or three times he essayed to relieve the monotony of her formal and stately (if it could be called stately) conversation with Elwood by recounting some of the more amusing and ludicrous experiences of the day—but she would not suffer it.

When the second course was finished and they were waiting to be farther served, Collins turned to Elwood with the remark:

“You are not married, I have understood?”

“I am not,” Elwood answered, with very slight color in his face.

“You will find plenty of bright girls in Excelsior—the city is noted for the beauty of its women.”

Not being able to catch her husband's eye while he was indulging in his badinage, Mrs. Collins was compelled to hear it through, and then she turned her eye toward him, and in a tone that may be imagined, but not described, said:

“Josh-u-a!”

He was more careful after that!

As soon as they were again seated in the drawing-room, in a tone indicating that the restraints of the table might be slightly relaxed, Mrs. Collins addressed her husband: “Joshua, you introduced Mr. Elwood to me as ‘our

minister.' I feel very glad that he has accepted the call of our church. We certainly need the services of a pious and faithful pastor."

Collins turned his eyes to Elwood for relief, and the latter promptly answered: "I have not accepted the call, Mrs. Collins; and, although I am giving it very serious consideration, I have not yet come to a final decision."

"But, Joshua, you certainly didn't introduce him to any other people in the same way?" she said to him, with a severe look.

Seeing the perplexity on his face, she continued very slowly:

"Joshua, I am very much surprised that you should make such a blunder. If he should not become our pastor, they will blame us for deceiving them; and there is nothing I dislike so much as deception!"

Collins was nonplused; and Elwood felt annoyed at the thought that he had permitted Collins to give so many people the impression that he was to become their pastor before he had decided to accept their call; so that neither of them could relieve the woman's mind of the burden that was on it.

At length she came to her own rescue by looking steadily at Elwood, and saying in as authoritative tone as she dared to assume: "Let us hope that he will accept the call of our church; and then we shall be free from all embarrassment."

The conversation lagged quite perceptibly after this; although both Elwood and Collins made several efforts to revive it. Mrs. Collins said nothing to check them, but her presence was *felt*.

At length Elwood pulled out his watch and inquired: "What is the hour of your prayer-meeting?"

"O, yes, I had forgotten," said Collins; and, then turning to Mrs. Collins, "Elizabeth, Mr. Elwood has

promised several of the people to attend prayer-meeting this evening, and I am going with him. Do you wish to attend?"

She paused a full minute, as if in the most serious deliberation, and then answered: "I should be glad to do so, but I have another engagement. My cook is going to leave, and I have promised to see another woman, who wants a place, this evening. O, what a trial servants are!"

"Then you will excuse Mr. Elwood and me for the rest of the evening?"

"Certainly," she quickly responded, "as the people will expect Mr. Elwood at the prayer-meeting."

The two men went to the prayer-meeting; and, as it was generally known that Elwood was in the city and would be at this meeting, the lecture-room was crowded.

At the request of the elders, he led the meeting; and as he stood up before the people to read the Scriptural lesson and the opening hymn, he was painfully oppressed with the intensity of their interest, but he was equal to the occasion. His voice had just enough tremor in it to touch the emotions of his audience; and he soon had complete command of their attention. His sincere prayer for the welfare and prosperity of the church caused their hearts to warm toward him in no common measure; and when he rose to offer comments and a word of exhortation upon the Scriptural lesson, they all realized that here was a man whose speech would both charm and edify them. He essayed no powerful or brilliant oratory—he only expressed his thought in clear and unaffected terms, and with a voice of force and melody.

And every face before him was an empty pitcher waiting to be filled!

And the only drawback to their satisfaction with his remarks was his statement that he had not yet accepted

their call, but was earnestly seeking divine direction in reference to it.

The prayers of a number of the members revealed their feelings in the most unmistakable manner. They not only besought the Lord to direct his servant to a proper decision, but also that he might be directed to this church, and that his labors in this field might be abundantly blessed. And the voluntary remarks offered by both men and women were in the nature of an appeal to him to cast his lot among them and become their pastor.

At the close of the services these appeals were renewed, very many remaining to express their anxiety for the welfare of the church and their earnest wish that he would accept their call.

Returning to Collins' house, after spending an hour at Vernon's office on the way, they found that Mrs. Collins, the children and the "servants" had all retired, and Elwood was not unwilling to be shown to his room, where he was soon lost in refreshing slumber.

"What a noble fellow he is!" said Collins to his wife as soon as he reached her chamber.

"I am very favorably impressed with him myself," she calmly replied, "he seems so reserved and dignified!"

Breakfast was announced the next morning at eight o'clock; and the same regularity and precision were observed as at dinner the previous evening, except that Mrs. Collins relaxed a little of her severe air; and Collins improved the opportunity to converse somewhat more cordially with Elwood and his children. He met the stern eye of his wife, however, when he attempted to make some playful remark to the waiter who brought him his second piece of beefsteak.

Breakfast over, Collins invited Elwood to conduct family prayers, and turning to his wife said in a low tone:

"Shan't we call in—?"

A severe look was his only answer; and the devotions of the family proceeded, no note of either Scripture or prayer being heard by any "servant" in the house.

Preparing to depart, Elwood shook hands very cordially with the children, and bade them good-by in a manner that won their complete confidence, and caused them to express the wish after he was gone that he would often come to see them.

Mrs. Collins also shook hands with him a little more cordially than was her custom, remarking in a tone of utmost propriety and *force*: "We shall be pleased to entertain you at any future time—you will surely accept the call of our church!"

Born to command first, last and always!

The two men walked down the street together, Collins introducing Elwood to quite a number of acquaintances whom they had not met the day before; and when they reached Collins' store, and were about to separate, he expressed his wish for Elwood's early return to the city so heartily and cordially that the latter could hardly resist the inclination to promise an acceptance of the church's call.

Elwood proceeded to Vernon's office, expecting to spend some time with him before leaving the city; but Vernon had received a number of very urgent calls early in the morning, and did not return from them until a very short time before the departure of Elwood's train, so the two friends had scarcely time to shake hands and say good-by to each other.

"I sincerely hope you will come here, for my benefit," said Vernon, "I am very lonesome most of the time."

His tone was very earnest, almost pathetic, and it went straight to Elwood's heart; but he could only say, in reply: "I will let you know very soon!" and then he hurried to the depot, and in a few hours was again in Beulah.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WOOING AND WAITING.

Elwood and Alice attended Gough's lecture according to arrangement; and, as Mrs. Goodway saw them enter the hall and take their seats, she whispered to the Doctor: "I always told you they would admire each other, if they would become well acquainted!"

She was not near enough to them, however, to notice the glances of appreciation that passed between them, as the noble orator executed his play upon the feelings and sensibilities of his audience.

If Elwood pressed Alice's arm a little more closely than she desired and quickened his step none too rapidly, during their return to her home, let him not be blamed severely therefor—he had almost decided to close his labors in Beulah and take his departure to another field.

It was in his mind, when they first reached the street, to propose a route homeward a little less direct than the one by which they came—but he wisely refrained from doing this.

After mutual comment on various features of the evening's entertainment, he said to her: "Which of all the arts do you admire most, Miss Carroll?"

"Oratory, oratory!" she answered, with unconscious enthusiasm, "I admire it more than any other art—yes, more than all others!"

This was just before they reached her door, and as

soon as she opened it, she invited him in, for which invitation he felt more gratitude than he cared to express!

They spent half an hour in the commonplaces incident to the occasion, and in "reviewing" the lecture they had heard—their admiration was not expressed in merely conventional superlatives, but in terms which showed how their souls had been thrilled by the current of Gough's fiery and impassioned eloquence.

In the midst of this very delightful interchange of thought and sentiment, Elwood made some allusion to the call from the Excelsior church, when she promptly asked him whether he had come to a decision in reference to it.

"Not yet, that is, not to a final decision"—his tone was of a very inquiring order, which she affected not to notice.

"I should think," she said, "it would be very hard to leave your people here, notwithstanding the prospect of usefulness before you at Excelsior!"

What was there in her voice that caused all the scenes he had passed through at Excelsior to pass before his consciousness so vividly?

"Yes, there is a grand field for work at that place," he responded, with considerable flutter in his breast; "but the people here protest against my leaving; and it is very hard for me to decide on the proper course. Could you give me an opinion as to what I ought to do?"

"It is certainly a very grave question for you to decide," she answered, with a kindly smile; "and no one but yourself has a right to say that you should refuse such an opportunity for activity and service."

There was a slight playfulness in her tone; but she manifested such an appreciation of his ministerial gifts, that he felt encouraged to go farther: "Really, Miss Carroll, the thought of preaching to these people oppresses me. It is such a large church, and there are so many different classes of people in it—some very rich, and others

very poor—some very intelligent, and others very ignorant—that I can not help shrinking from the responsibility”

“‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,’ said St. Paul,” she quickly answered.

“But suppose I should be troubled with theological doubts?”

This was near as Elwood felt justified in coming to a revelation of the difficulties he had already passed through and his apprehension of greater difficulties in the future; and, to his unfeigned surprise, she had an answer even to this: “You can never have any serious uncertainty concerning the preaching your people will need for their intellectual aliment and their instruction in righteousness; and as for theological doubts, can you not master them as others have done before you?”

“‘Instruction!’ that is a very appropriate word, Miss Carroll; but the problem for me to solve will be how to convey it to them.”

“The only way I can convey any instruction to my Sunday School class,” she responded, with some animation, “is to become very much interested in them—to give them my life, as it were—and I find the same is true with all my classes in the College—does not the same principle apply to preachers?”

“It certainly does; but I fear we do not realize it as clearly as we should.”

“I, too, have sometimes thought,” she continued, in a very modest tone, but with increased brightness of countenance, “that preachers should make more diligent search for the moral faculties of their people, and strive to educate—*lead forth*—their moral natures, according to the principle that is so universally recognized by teachers and educators”—but, fearing she had said more than was

agreeable to him, she suddenly paused and looked at him, apologetically.

[Go on with your criticism, Alice—he will listen, “with pleasure and profit,” as long as you shall speak!]

“But it will be very hard for me to carry out this principle at Excelsior among so many different classes of people—I shall have so much to learn.”

“You are not too old to learn yet, are you?” she answered, with a merry laugh. “Should not a preacher be a constant learner as well as a teacher?”

“Yes, he should; and I have learned a great deal since I have been preaching in Beulah—much more than I learned in College or the Theological Seminary.”

“And it is for that reason, perhaps, that you are called to come up higher—that is, where you can learn still more!”

“‘Called,’ do you say, Miss Carroll? Do you really think the Lord has called me to Excelsior?”

“The church, at any rate, has called you,” was her ready response; “and if there be a divine call, you will surely hear it—perhaps you have heard it already.”

Elwood was highly gratified—what man of his age would not have been?—at the manifestation of her confidence in his ability to occupy the field before him at Excelsior; but he also desired some expression of regret on her part in case he should leave Beulah; so he said to her, in a very serious tone: “But it will be so hard for me to leave my church and all my friends in Beulah.”

Whether she suspected the point of this remark or not, she merely answered: “Must not the minister of Christ be ready to go wherever duty calls him?”

“But, Miss Carroll,” he continued, still more seriously, “when I go to Excelsior—I mean *if* I go there—I shall hardly know how to preach to the people, especially the first few Sundays. I shall not know how to ‘go

out or come in' before them, or what message to offer them."

She gave no immediate answer to this, but presently took down a small Bible from the mantel, and opening the book of Isaiah, read in a low, clear tone :

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of
' him that bringeth good tidings ; that publisheth peace ;
' that bringeth good tidings of good ; that publisheth sal-
' vation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth !"

Seeing how much he was interested, after a short pause she turned to the last chapter of Revelation, and continued, in a still richer tone :

"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you
' these things in the churches. I am the root and the off-
' spring of David, and the bright and morning star.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let
' him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst
' come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of
' life freely."

O, the rythm and cadence of her voice !—and it was all for *his* ear !

Surely he may utter the feeling that swells in his bosom—and what more favorable time could he have than the present one ?

"Many thanks, Miss Carroll," he said, as she closed the book and laid it on the table, and trying to look her in the face, with a trembling in his voice that he could not subdue, he continued : "When"—there was no "if" about it now—"I go to Excelsior—"

But she quickly interrupted him by saying, very pleasantly : "You will surely serve the people with all the gifts and graces that you possess !"

He was vanquished !

Then their conversation turned to less serious topics ; and when Elwood took his departure, she said to him with

a little archness: "You will call to bid us good-by before you leave Beulah?"

Which he promised with the greatest possible sincerity.

Before retiring that night he wrote a long letter to his mother, to which he received the following reply the next week:

ARCADIA, Sept. —, 187—.

MY DEAR HENRY:

Mr. Edwards says he can not regard the call you have received from Excelsior in any other light than as providential, but, at the same time, he does not feel like unduly urging you to accept it, because the responsibility of a decision rests upon yourself alone. Concerning my own opinion, I fear that my pride and interest in you might prevent the proper exercise of my judgment, and therefore I must be careful not to influence you by the considerations that present themselves to my mind. But I will go so far as to say that you should not decline this call merely because some people might think, that if you should accept it, you are influenced by selfish or worldly motives—provided you know that such is not the case! Of course, you can not rule *all* material and personal considerations out of your mind, and perhaps you ought not to do so, but you should see to it very carefully, that your *supreme motive* is the desire to do your whole duty, and not to secure your pecuniary or professional advancement—see to it, Henry, that this supreme motive is spiritual, and not carnal.

* * * * *

I was not at all surprised to learn that Miss Carroll was not engaged to Mr. Allison; but the question whether *you* can win her depends, as I believe, on yourself. Her sense of your fitness for the Excelsior pulpit, expressed so finely and delicately, is certainly the highest honor she could pay you as a preacher, and you have a right to cherish it very highly; but this is a very different thing from surrendering her *heart* to you!

It was certainly very fortunate that you did not make an avowal of your feelings toward her in the interview you speak of. She undoubtedly thought you were about to do so, and not wishing to trifle with you (and perhaps not wishing to reject your attentions altogether) she skillfully interrupted you with a compliment that I have no doubt was entirely sincere, and worth more to you from her lips than all the praises of your ministry that you have ever heard. I also believe that you would be justified in inter-

preting her words as a permission to hope, as well as an injunction not to be in too great haste!

It is true you have had a partial acquaintance with her for several years; but you should respect her too highly to speak to her of love until you know—do not permit yourself to be mistaken on this point!—that she is ready to receive your avowal, and will give you the response you desire. There be many signs and tokens of love besides words, and sometimes these are more expressive than any words that might be used. You can easily watch her eyes—which you say are very bright and lovely—and likewise the expression of her countenance and her general air and manner toward you, and thereby determine how far your suit is agreeable to her, and how ardently she would wish you to persist in it. If you have made any impression on her heart, she can not wholly conceal it, and perhaps she will not try to do so. At any rate, she will not object to your *divining* her feelings toward you, and she may especially desire for a time the pleasure of an unspoken understanding with you—could anything be sweeter to young lovers?

Be very careful, therefore, in all your advances toward her not to offend her delicacy or self-respect in the slightest degree. If there be anything in you that she will appreciate and admire, it will be this. And your own manly dignity, do not sacrifice that for her sake—*she* will not desire it.

Even if she has the highest possible regard for you, she may still have a girl's natural desire to be sought and courted; and, without being at all vain or fond of flattery, she may wish to receive considerable homage and attention from you, before she will admit, even to her own consciousness, that she loves you. You can gracefully concede her this privilege—rather this *right*—without any fear of failure in your effort to win her heart and hand. Will it not be better for both of you, that your love for each other should be a plant of slow and steady growth, and that you should become well acquainted, before you are so deeply in love that you can not obtain a true knowledge of each other's character? Ask no woman to *love* you, Henry, until she knows what manner of man you are!

Perhaps your most effective way to win her love will be to let her see that you also desire her highest respect; and if she sees that your love for her is tempered and restrained by your respect for her, she will not only esteem you more highly, but will love you more tenderly in the end! You can easily let her know that you are in earnest in your suit without annoying her by haste or

urgency. The flowers enjoy the light and heat of the sun ; but if it shines on them too warmly, they are apt to wither and fade !

I believe that she is too noble to practice any sort of coquetry ; but even if there be a decided *affinity* between your nature and hers, she will not yield her heart to you without assiduous wooing. Let your attentions to her, however, be very delicate and refined, and as *spiritual* as possible. You will not only be surer to win her in this way, but after she is won, she will be infinitely more precious !

Courtship should not be a mere means of securing the prize you covet, but a mutual preparation for a life-union of respect and confidence as well as of love !

Whether you should make any expression whatever of your interest in her before leaving Beulah, in case you should accept the call to Excelsior, I am not prepared to say definitely, but I should think not. You could not possibly secure a definite response, or take with you her promise of marriage ; but you *can* take her high appreciation of your manliness and your professional talents—will not this be exceedingly precious to you ?

The distance is not so great but that you can see her betimes ; and you can both have the pleasure and profit of friendly correspondence.

Miss Carroll has already manifested considerable interest in your preaching and your ministry ; let her know, as frankly and delicately as possible, that you appreciate this at its full value, and are very grateful for it. She will count it the highest honor to be consulted by you in reference to your professional work ; and I have no doubt that whatever counsel or advice she may give you will be disinterested and free from all guile and affectation. And be careful that your interest in her shall not in any manner interfere with your attention to your ministerial duties—rather let it stimulate you to increased activity and earnestness. I am certain that if she were to express her desire on this point, it would agree with mine.

My dear Henry, if you would know how to woo and win, you must first know how to WOO AND WAIT !

From Your Affectionate Mother,

EMMA ELWOOD.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

EXCELSIOR, Oct. —, 187—.

MY DEAR MOTHER :

I preached my first sermon in Excelsior to-day to a much larger congregation than I expected to see. You may judge yourself of my feelings as I looked into their faces—my relation to them so real, so vital—and they all seemed to realize this fact as clearly as I did. I could see a large measure of sympathy in their countenances, but also close scrutiny and intense curiosity.

And as I looked over the audience before the services began, notwithstanding my very limited acquaintance with them, I could easily see that it comprised many different classes of society. The dress and air of many of the women, especially, betokened great wealth; and, while I noticed none that were very poorly or shabbily attired, I thought I could see very many men and women in the congregation who had a hard struggle to secure a comfortable livelihood—their faces showed this, if their dress did not. I could also see on the faces of some of the most prosperous business men to whom I had been introduced, marks of care and anxiety, and evidences that their energy and activity were severely taxing, if not slowly consuming, their vital powers. There were women there who looked as if they were severely burdened with domestic labors and family cares, and others I feared who were suffering from neglect, unkindness and abuse. Then there were the young and the gay in considerable numbers, as well as some that seemed very old and feeble, and others whose hearts were sore on account of recent bereavements.

I was so impressed with the variety of earthly condition in the audience, that I forgot to consider the question how many of them were Christians and how many were not; but I was seized with an overpowering desire to preach to them in such a way that they would all be profited and edified; and that seemed to be what they expected me to do.

We sang "Guide me, O, thou Great Jehovah," and "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord," before the sermon, and "Nearer, my God, to Thee" at the close of the services. I deemed it best to select old and familiar hymns for my first service; and the attention the audience paid to both the reading and singing of them satisfied me that I was right.

When I stood up to pray, the silence and attention at first were very oppressive; but soon the very windows of heaven were opened, and the light and glory of God came down upon us. Although there was no audible manifestation on the part of the audience, I realized that their feelings were *en rapport* with mine; and I felt that I was voicing their common desires and aspirations as well as my own; and when I concluded I almost thought I could hear a murmur of gratitude for the office I had rendered.*

For Scriptural lessons I read Solomon's Choice, I Kings, III: 3-15, and the "Beatitudes," Mathew v: 1-12; having taken pains to study these passages very carefully, so as to comprehend their full force and beauty, and make them expressive of my feelings on beginning my ministry in the place. And, O, what interest the people manifested as I read!

I preached to them half an hour—taking care not to occupy more time than that—from Isaiah LV: 11-12:

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater;

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

*The prayer offered by Elwood on this occasion was as follows:

"Holy, holy, art thou, O Lord of Hosts! Heaven is thy throne, and thy dominion is from sea to sea. Thou art higher than all heights and deeper than all depths! But great and high and holy as thou art, we rejoice that thy ear is ever open to our cry, and that thy hand is ever stretched out to help us and sustain us. Help us, we pray thee, to adore thee, to worship thee, to love thee, and to rejoice in the blessedness of thy fatherly love!

"O, thou Eternal Spirit, that dost pervade all worlds, and dost abide with all contrite hearts, we pray thee to enter our souls to-day, as we come hither to pray and to worship. Quicken us, direct us, inspire us! Lift us above all the things of time and sense, and help us to stand on the mountain heights, where our eyes shall be feasted with the Infinite Beauty, and our souls shall be made partakers of the Infinite Love!

"O, thou Christ, make us like thyself. Clothe us in thy likeness and image, and breathe into us thy own spirit; that we may be made partakers of thy divine nature, and become heirs with thee to an inheritance of immortal life.

"We thank thee, O Lord, for this church. We thank thee that, amid the energy and enterprise and material progress of this great city, it is in the hearts

It was my purpose in this discourse to show how the word of the Lord is adapted to the wants and capacities of the human soul, and how thorough and effective is its influence upon the hearts and lives of the sons of men. During the delivery of the sermon I experienced such a conception of the beauty and excellence of our holy religion, that I involuntarily declared that it needed no external testimony to prove that it was a message from heaven. I suppose if Prof. Ironsides had been present he would have taken me to task for discrediting miracles and prophecy as the foundations of the Christian faith; but I had no idea of doing anything of the kind at the time.

Vernon has a large medical practice, which keeps him very busy; but he complains of loneliness a good deal of the time, and was exceedingly glad to have me come to Excelsior.

I am getting acquainted with the people as rapidly as possible, and can already see that it will be very difficult to minister to them in such a manner as to satisfy them all. It will require great patience and wisdom, as well as constant prayer.

And in addition to this I am sorely beset with doubts in reference to "future punishment" and "total depravity," and I have grave fears that I shall have doubts on other points besides these. So serious has this issue become in my mind that I fear the Presbytery of Excelsior, which is to meet next week in my church, would refuse to install me as pastor if all the members knew my views—or rather doubts. Why should I be tormented—I can not use a milder term—in this way, just as I am entering on my ministry in this place, and when there is such a prospect of usefulness before me?

of so many men and women to turn aside for a time to the worship of the Most High God and to the exercise of their higher and nobler natures. O, that this church might be a light which shall lighten every man that cometh within its influence. Grant that all its members may be worthy of the Christ whose name they bear. Help them all to become examples of honor, examples of honesty, examples of benevolence, examples of self-sacrifice; and may the light of all their graces and virtues so shine, that men may *see* their good works, and glorify our Father in Heaven!

"May this sacred temple where we are gathered to-day be a place where the Lord by his Spirit delighteth to dwell; a place where the rich and the poor shall meet together, for the Lord is the maker of them all; where every weary heart shall seek rest and sympathy and comfort; and where every lost soul, whether of man or woman, shall find an ark of refuge and a harbor of safety.

"Help us all to-day to cast our burdens on the Lord that he may sustain us. Help us to lay our heads upon the bosom of the Son of Man, that he may speak peace unto our souls, and write his name upon our foreheads!

"We would not ask thee for wealth or ease or exemption from care and labor and sacrifice. Rather would we pray for whatsoever portion and whatsoever

The city is full of saloons (nearly one to every hundred inhabitants) besides very many other agencies of evil; and it seems to me I ought to be directing all my thought and energy to opposing these, instead of having an incessant struggle to keep down the doubts that arise in my own breast!

I called on Allison the day I received your letter and showed it to him. He read it over slowly, and then said in a very low tone: "How much better these women understand matters of courtship than we do—than I do."

We spent several evenings together before I left Beulah; and just before we parted the last time he laid his hand on my shoulder with the remark: "Perhaps you are following my advice and your mother's too. I told you to secure the prize, and she told you *how* to secure her. You ought to thank the Lord for so clever a mother!"

From Your Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

gifts will best qualify us to do thy will and thy work. Give us large hearts; give us pure thoughts; give us high and noble aspirations; give us practical wisdom; give us clear sense; that we may discern wisdom and judgment and justice, and fulfil the end and aim of our being beneath the sun.

"May we ever seek to walk in the paths of wisdom and truth and righteousness; and as our days and our years pass, may our lives become grander and nobler, more and more beautiful, and more and more beneficent. Wherever there is darkness, help us to carry light and hope; wherever there are broken hearts help us to bind them up; wherever there are tears help us to wipe them away!

"O, Sun of Righteousness, shine upon us with healing in thy beams; dissolve our doubts; interpret our visions; scatter our darkness; purify our hearts; heal our infirmities; help our unbelief; qualify us for every duty, for every service and for every trial; and so inspire and direct us in all things, that when our earthly lives shall close, we may rise on wings triumphant over and above the stars of heaven, to join in the chorus of cherubim and seraphim, and to be forever with the Lord! Amen!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DOCTORS AND DOCTRINES.

“Elwood,” I have talked with quite a number of your congregation since Sunday; and they were all delighted with your sermon and other services. You did a wise thing in coming to Excelsior, and you will not regret it.”

It was thus that Vernon addressed his friend in the latter's room on the Saturday evening following the delivery of Elwood's sermon, as recorded in the previous chapter. The tone was very cordial, but tinged with sadness.

“I was very much gratified with the reception they gave me,” said Elwood; “but I can hardly expect such a congregation every Sunday, as a great many came last Sunday out of curiosity, I have no doubt.”

“You may not have so large a one, perhaps; but you will have an abundance of hearers, as the membership of the church is very large, and you have already made an excellent impression.”

As Elwood made no direct reply to this, Vernon presently continued, a little more sadly: “During all the time of your services Sunday I was thinking of our College days, and also the few months we were together at Union Seminary when I—”

He here paused very suddenly, as if expecting Elwood to assist him in expressing his feelings; but the latter made no response, except a friendly and sympathetic look.

“You haven’t forgotten that we were classmates both at the College and Seminary, have you, Elwood?”

“Why, no,” was the quick response, “I have thought a great deal about it, especially since I came here, and I have been very happy to renew our acquaintance and friendship.”

“Elwood, I was going to say a few moments ago, that my hearing you preach last Sunday, awakened very peculiar feelings in my breast; in short, I could not help envying you your office and position as a minister. For the first time since I left the Seminary, a feeling of regret came over me that I did not continue my theological studies—but no, that would have been impossible, utterly impossible.”

“But, Vernon, you have entered upon another noble profession, in which you have been very successful, and your practice is increasing all the time?”

“Yes, I have a profession in which I have all the practice I want, and all the reputation too, I sometimes feel!” was the rather melancholy answer.

“You are surely not getting tired so early in your career?”

“No, I would not admit that I am; but, Elwood, there is something in me that refuses to be satisfied with the fruits of medical practice, whether they consist in money or reputation. I suppose it is because I had the ministry in view so many years.”

“For that matter,” said Elwood, “the ministry is still open to you; there is no law compelling you to continue the practice of medicine.”

“There are many laws besides those on the statute-book,” was the rather rueful answer. “It would be just as impossible for me to enter the ministry to-day as it was when I left the Seminary. The practice of medicine, for even a few years, doesn’t tend to restore one’s belief in

miracles. The tides of the sea ebb and flow just as they did six thousand—for aught I know six million—years ago; the laws of Nature are all unchanged and unchangeable.”

“Except by divine power,” interrupted Elwood; but Vernon noticed that he winced somewhat under his (Vernon’s) statement of Nature’s inflexibility.

“Very well, show me the miracle or prove it by sufficient testimony, and I will believe; but”—in a lowering tone—“I do not wish to argue the question; on the contrary, I often wish I could believe in miracles, so I could count myself a Christian once more, but even that seems impossible. So I continue the same round of professional duty from day to day, from week to week, and shall, I suppose, from year to year.”

“But don’t you find great satisfaction in your work?” asked Elwood, “You have constant calls from all parts of the city; your opinion is consulted in critical cases; you are building up a professional reputation of which any man might be proud; and besides all these facts, you are doing the people great service.”

“*Some* service, you might say, more properly,” was the answer. “At any rate, I go when they call me and because they call me—perhaps that is all I can claim for myself.”

“Why, Vernon, I have always supposed that the standard of duty among physicians was a noble and disinterested one, and also that their usefulness to society was as great as that of any other profession—unless it be the ministry.”

“Far be it from me to say you are wrong,” Vernon replied. “I was only revealing my own condition of mind to you. When I began to practice medicine, I supposed that, whatever might be said of other professions, *we* had an exact science, not only free from superstition,

but likewise free from speculation and uncertainty; and I actually pitied the lawyers and preachers, who, as I supposed, had to deal so largely in speculation and make their way through so much maze and mystification, if not downright deception, and I wondered how it was possible for them to maintain a true standard of honesty. I did not have to treat a thousand and one cases before I found out that if medicine is indeed an exact science, I was a very *inexact* practitioner of it. I soon learned that many of the specific remedies laid down in the books were sometimes wholly ineffective, and that every case of disease has a psychological as well as physiological aspect."

"But all that did not effect your professional integrity?" interrupted Elwood.

"I hope not," was the reply, "but my professional pride was greatly humbled. Will you believe me when I tell you that the longer I practice medicine the less faith I have in our specific remedies? And yet I go whenever I am called, and must needs 'prescribe' for every patient."

"You don't mean to say that you prescribe dishonestly or deceive your patients?"

"The point I was seeking to make is, that, however much or however little confidence I may have in the medicines I use, sick people all want to be treated; and when they call me I feel bound to give my utmost interest and attention to each case, studying faithfully all its aspects and conditions, and doing everything I can to restore the patient to health, which process on my part involves great wear and tear of nervous force."

"But you have had marked success with most of your patients, haven't you?"

"Very many of them get well; but I often wonder whether it is on account of my medicines, or in spite of them! While I often feel regret that I have so little faith in my prescriptions, on the whole, I believe that my work

is better than if I relied entirely on the formulas of the books. I would not like to confess that my standard of honesty is lower than that of physicians who prescribe in the 'regular' way, and would almost think they had to do penance if they should fail to give any organ its technical name, or should write a prescription in the King's English. Still I frequently prescribe what I may call 'make-believe' medicines, because the patient is in such a psychological condition that he requires some visible and tangible remedy; and when such is the case, my prescription is as essential, perhaps more so, than when I give medicines for their direct physical effect."

"Is it not your duty to diagnose the minds of your patients as well as their bodies?" asked Elwood, in the tone of one who knew not how deep water he was getting into.

"It certainly is; but there is likewise danger of my falling into indifference and charlatanry, and I can only justify myself in practicing as I do by keeping a high standard of honor *in my own breast*. I am not required to tell my patients how 'harmless' are the remedies I sometimes prescribe for them, or how far their diseases are 'in their minds' rather than in their bodies; but I am required to study their complaints faithfully, and let them see that I have a real and genuine interest in my work."

"You haven't gone so far in your psychological treatment as to believe in 'Christian Science' or the 'Faith Cure?' asked Elwood, smiling.

"There is no danger of that," was the quick answer; "but although I am a 'regular' physician, I do not believe that these people are all deceivers; perhaps I have no right to say that any of them are such. On the other hand, I know they often produce effects that are marvelous, and they actually cure a great many *nervous* disorders. Most of their claims seem to me preposterous; but

this should not prevent my acknowledging what I know they accomplish. They certainly hold the fundamental principle that the mind has great power over the body—who shall assume to prescribe the measure or limit of that power? And as long as I can not determine how much of psychological influence enters into my own practice, why should I deny all virtue and efficacy to that which they exercise?—even though their fundamental theory seems to be a false one? At any rate, they preach a GOSPEL OF HEALTH, which is not to be despised. But, Elwood, you seem to be in a ‘brown study’ over all I have said to you”—and Vernon turned an inquiring face toward his friend.

After some moments, Elwood spoke: “I was tracing the analogy—or, at least, what seems to me the analogy—between your work and mine. If a physician needs to understand the state of people’s minds and bodies in order to prescribe for them, how much more does the preacher need to understand their whole natures in order to minister to them properly.”

It was now Vernon’s turn for the “brown study,” and after considerable reflection, he responded rather slowly: “But you will have to stop there; you can not surely claim any analogy between the Confession of Faith and *Materia Medica*?”

Elwood felt the force of this, but immediately answered, in a very thoughtful manner: “That very question arose in my mind before you spoke; but I could give no definite answer to it. If, however, the physician must exercise his reason and judgment so largely in a profession based on what many claim to be an exact science—you say you used to have that opinion yourself—must not the preacher exercise all his faculties on a still larger scale, in applying the Scriptures and doctrines of his church to his hearers?”

"That wasn't the view I used to take of the preacher's office"—Vernon's tone always became sad when he referred to his former years—"I was taught that the message of the preacher was given to him in the Bible, in plain and distinct terms, and that all he had to do was to declare it to men, whether they would receive it or not—such at least was my understanding of the teaching I received. Still I believe some preachers are taking a wider range now, and are trying to reconcile Christianity with Reason and Science and Philosophy, instead of proving its divine origin by miracles and prophecies. I even read in a paper the other day that the influence of German Rationalism is beginning to be felt in Union Seminary, and that some of its professors are denying the infallibility or the 'inerrancy' of the Bible. Preaching has become a very different thing from what I supposed it was when I quit the Seminary. Doctors of Divinity lose faith in their specific remedies and their formulated prescriptions as well as Doctors of Medicine—and both of them continue to practice their professions because the people need their services and call for them. I guess there is some analogy between their cases after all." 7

"More than you thought at any rate."

"More than I thought when I began to study medicine, you may safely say."

"Vernon," Elwood here interrupted, "let me tell you why I was so quick to see the analogy of which we spoke. For some time past I have been seriously troubled with doubts about 'future punishment,' as set forth in orthodox standards; and when you spoke of losing faith in your formulated prescriptions, I could not help seeing the similarity between your case and mine. I am utterly unable to determine what I should preach in reference to this doctrine, and there are at least *shadows* of doubt as to other doctrines resting on my mind."

“And I suppose other orthodox preachers have quit preaching about it because they are in the same condition of mind,” responded Vernon; “but what will they all do when they begin to doubt whether the Bible is a revelation from heaven, and whether Christianity is anything more than a human religion? As for myself, my *religiousness* has never entirely left me, and I would gladly be again counted as a religious man and take some part in religious services—provided I could do so without losing my sense of honor, without being guilty of deception and hypocrisy.”

“You ought not to find that so difficult, it seems to me, Vernon,” said Elwood, in as encouraging a tone as he could command.

“Alas,” was Vernon’s response, “it is very hard to renew one’s youth; and, as I said before, the practice of medicine does not tend to make one believe in anything that can not be fully demonstrated to the reason, if not brought to the knowledge of the senses. The doctors assimilate the doctrines very slowly, if they can be said to assimilate them at all.”

Vernon here rose to leave, but just before he reached the door, turned to Elwood and asked: “Did you know that Mark Conklin is in Excelsior?”

“Is it possible,” said Elwood. “When did you see him?”

“Only to-day, and then I spent but a few minutes with him,” responded Vernon. “I just happened to meet him as I was going by Higgins & Muggins’ law office.”

“What is he doing here? Where has he spent the years since we saw him in New York?”

“He told me that he traveled over both Europe and America until his patrimony was exhausted, and that he had now taken a clerkship with Higgins & Muggins. I

told him you were here, and he at once said he must call and see you ! ”

Before Vernon reached the door a knock was heard, and, on opening it, Elwood again stood face to face with his old classmate.

Conklin showed some marks of years upon him, but he was still vigorous in body, and after the greeting was over, he sat down with the same easy air that he had carried in former years.

After numerous inquiries about Conklin's travels, which he answered with more or less definiteness, rather more or less *indefiniteness*, Elwood said to him : “ You look like the same fellow you always were, Conklin. ”

“ I may look the same ; but did you ever figure up the difference it makes in a man when he has to work for a living, if he gets one ? Have you any idea how it makes me feel ? How many hundred years do you suppose it will take me to get used to it ? ”

“ I suppose it would be just as hard for me to learn to do without work, ” was Elwood's answer.

“ No accounting for differences of taste, is there ? ” said Conklin, in his drollest manner ; “ but how are you both getting along in this beautiful and growing city ? Do you think you will save Excelsior from destruction by your preaching as easily as Jonah—if there ever was such a man—saved Nineveh ? ”

“ I can not tell what I shall accomplish, ” responded Elwood, “ but I hope I shall not labor altogether in vain. There is, at least, a great opportunity for usefulness before me. ”

“ I meant my question for both of you, ” said Conklin ; “ but I forgot that Vernon is a Doctor of Medicine, instead of a Doctor of Divinity. How did that happen, Vernon ? Did Union Seminary become so heterodox, that you couldn't complete your theological course there, with-

out losing your faith in the Bible? I believe you told me you quit the Seminary soon after I met you in New York?"

"Conklin," said Vernon, "I quit studying theology because I couldn't believe in miracles, and I didn't want to become a Christian minister, when I doubted the very foundation stone of Christianity."

"And you joined the noble army of physicians in order to escape all superstition and uncertainty—and quackery? I should think you have found exactly the profession that would suit you, Vernon. Everything about it is positive and certain. The physician always knows what ails the patient and what medicine to prescribe; and the medicine he gives always cures—or kills! It suits you, doesn't it?"

As Vernon made no immediate reply to this, Conklin continued: "But why should you give up theology merely because you wasn't certain about those Bible stories?—do all theological students at Union Seminary leave the institution as soon as they begin to question the 'inerrancy' of every chapter and verse in the Bible?"

"I can not answer for others, Conklin," replied Vernon, "I took the only course that was possible for me."

✓ "And how about *your* orthodoxy, Elwood?" said Conklin, turning towards the latter. "You still believe everything that a Presbyterian preacher has to believe, I suppose?"—"Hades," "Miracles," "Atonement," "Trinity," "Predestination," and all the other articles of the Confession?"

This was rather severe probing for Elwood, but he soon replied; "I believe all truth, Conklin, and I desire to obtain the largest possible view of it; and, although I have not as clear an understanding of all these doctrines as I would wish, I yet hope to obtain such light and wisdom

as will enable me to do my whole duty in the position that I occupy."

"And don't you also hope," said Conklin, "that I will have enough wisdom to fill my position of clerk for the firm of Higgins & Muggins, so as to help them show the people what a beautiful and perfect science the law is, and always has been since the world began?"

And then Conklin and Vernon both withdrew, leaving Elwood to complete the preparation of his sermon for Sunday morning.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WOOING AND WORKING.

EXCELSIOR, April —, 188—.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

Nine months of my pastorate in this place have already passed; and in a little over three months the anniversary of my installation will be here.

I am happy to write to you that my congregations are still good; and at each communion we have taken in a number of new members, some fifty or sixty in all. The people continue very friendly, and give me repeated assurances that my preaching is acceptable to them.

The conflict that I feared between the rich and the poor in the church has not come yet. I sometimes fear that I have been too anxious to avoid it; and yet, so far as I am aware, I have not sacrificed any principle of right in my efforts after peace and harmony. I have endeavored to treat all alike, and have recognized the claim of every man and woman in the church to my best service in his and her behalf. I have sought to present the Gospel of Christ to all classes and conditions of men, and have endeavored to make all feel that they are welcome in my church. In my intercourse with the people I have endeavored to show them that I respect them for what they are, and not for their wealth—or the lack of it.

But, although I preach thus and believe thus, the great difference in their external condition oppresses my heart at times very seriously. It is hard to see why there should be, even among my own people, such luxury and ease on the one hand, and such severe grinding toil on the other, such a surfeit of earthly goods with some, and with others such inability to obtain more than the barest necessities of life. Whenever I reveal my feelings on this subject to any of the business and professional men whom I meet they almost invariably say, "It was always so, and always will be so," and then commence talking about the growth and prosperity of the city. But I can not drive the subject out of my mind in

this way, and I am constantly asking myself the question whether I am doing all that I ought to do to remedy such a state of affairs.

I have been especially exercised on this subject because I hear so much complaint of Mr. Simpkinson, who is one of the elders of my church, on account of the manner in which he treats the tenants living in his buildings in the portion of the city called "Egypt." I am satisfied that the criticisms of the public do him more or less injustice, but at the same time he comes far short of the teachings of Christ in his dealings with some of his tenants.

Would I transcend my functions if I should present the matter to him? Would he even give me a hearing? Do I understand the case well enough and know enough about his tenants to tell him wherein he is wrong? And, if I should attempt to do so, would it not be apt to renew the strife that formerly prevailed in the church, and which I am so anxious to avoid? Such questions as these come before me from time to time and perplex me not a little.

And he is by no means the only rich man in my church who needs admonition in reference to his dealings with the poor.

I must confess that my feelings on this subject have been considerably affected by a tailor named Gibbert, who has a small store near my hotel, and whose acquaintance I formed soon after coming here. He is not a member of any church, and denounces all religion as "superstition" and all worship as "slavery," but he manifests a peculiar interest in all questions relating to the poorer classes of people; and he has such a terse and vigorous way of expressing his views, that I am compelled to listen to him. He fears neither man nor devil (nor God I almost think) in his speech; but he has such an incisive and pungent way of putting things, that, although a man of limited education, he always has the last word, whether he is discussing politics, social questions or religion. He boldly declares, in the presence of rich men, that laboring people are compelled to contribute a large part of their earnings to support the rich in idleness and luxury, and that neither preachers nor newspapers dare to tell the truth on the subject.

I was talking with him one day, in the presence of quite a crowd of citizens, about some question relating to our city affairs, and rather inadvertently remarked, that the best men of the city were in favor of the particular policy that I was advocating, when, in his peculiarly forcible manner, he broke in: "Who the d—l do you mean by the 'best men' in the city? The best men in Excelsior are the men that carry the hods and dig the sewers!"

As usual he secured the ear of the crowd, and I could not begrudge them the laugh they had at my expense.

On another occasion, while in his store having my measure taken for a new coat, I asked him if he attended church, and on his replying that he did not, I invited him to attend mine some Sunday.

"What for?" he asked, very abruptly.

"Why—Why—Gibbert," I replied, "I think it wouldn't do you any harm, at best, and the services might be of some profit to you."

"Does it do people any good to attend church?" he inquired, in a very sharp tone, as soon as I was through with my answer.

"Yes, to be sure," I replied, "it will make them better, if they come in the right spirit?"

"Then there must have been some mighty mean people in Excelsior at one time in their lives, if they have been getting better all the time they have been attending the various churches," he said. "But I won't insinuate that your members have been getting better any faster than the others; indeed, I should rather say, that some of them have been getting better most confounded slow!"

He raised the laugh on me again, but promised to come to church some Sunday, and has since done so two or three times.

Notwithstanding his almost total unbelief in everything religious or spiritual, he has some very clever points of character, and if he were a Christian, I believe he would be a very useful man.

I was very glad to learn from your last letter, that Mr. Edwards has such confidence that the Lord will preserve me from serious error and prevent my becoming a Universalist; but, if I could see him, I would feel bound to tell him that my views concerning future punishment are still very much unsettled; and I also think it is a great mistake to tell men that they are totally depraved; but I have come to the conclusion that it is better to be humble and reverent in reference to these points, than to dogmatize upon them.

But occasionally serious questions concerning the Atonement, the Trinity, and the Infallibility of the Bible come across my mind, and make me question whether, after all, I have not mistaken my calling. On the other hand, I have received so many assurances from the people that my ministry is acceptable to them, and my attachment to them is so strong, that it would be well-nigh impossible for me even to withdraw from this church and seek another field.

When I first came here I thought I should preach some of my old sermons; but there has seemed to be such a demand every Sunday for special study and preparation, that I have only used one or two old manuscripts since I came here.

I have taken almost the exact course you advised with reference to Miss Carroll. Availing myself of the privilege of corresponding with her, I wrote to her soon after I came here, giving her some account of my work and experience, with a description of city life so far as it had come under my observation. Her answer was a decided surprise to me, so lively was the interest she manifested in every topic or subject suggested by my letter.

And when she set out to give me items and news from Beulah, how charming and graceful seemed her pen! Every house or tree or animal, that she described or touched upon, excited my attention; and the play of her fancy made the most insignificant circumstances and events both lively and interesting.

Her appreciation of my deference and confidence in consulting her about my work was couched in the most choice and delicate terms, and her response, while very modest and unaffected, was so clear, so suggestive and so encouraging!

Her letter was not a long one, but it was full of piquancy and variety, and the spirit of it was very friendly and cordial; and she closed with a neat and graceful expression of her continued interest in my ministerial career.

Which I interpreted as an invitation to write to her concerning my labors as fully and freely as I desired!

Her subsequent answers to my letters were still more charming and interesting, each one being a new revelation of her womanly and intellectual qualities, and each one gratifying me with an increased interest, as I imagined, in my ministry.

After receiving a number of such letters, I unfolded some of the details of my work, giving description of persons and circumstances, and inviting any comments or suggestions she might offer. I was in every case gratified with the insight and clear understanding that she manifested—it almost seemed to me that she knew the people and understood the circumstances I described to her, better than I did myself. Her suggestions were, however, such an appeal to my reason and judgment, that they seemed more like inspiration than advice.

When I wrote to her that I feared a conflict in reference to the attendance of the poorer classes at church, she replied: "If you make your preaching so noble and eloquent that both the rich and poor will want to hear you, the people will open their pews to all who come, no matter how poor they are!"

In reference to the theological doubts which I took the liberty to express to her, she wrote: "It seems to me that you can only settle your views of future punishment and the other doctrines of your church by increased interest and activity in your labors and

by cultivating the spirit of self-sacrifice. The creed should be interpreted by the cross. 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are *life*,' said the Lord Jesus."

I made a trip to Beulah on professional business a few weeks ago; and, although I took a very pleasant afternoon drive with her into the country, and conversed with her on a great variety of topics, she warded off all my efforts, both direct and indirect, to introduce the subject of love and matrimony.

When I expressed my gratitude for the interest she had manifested in my ministry and for her appreciation of my fitness for the pulpit of the Excelsior church, she rather playfully responded: "O, we can not help seeing the stars when they shine on us!"

I was so encouraged by this that I ventured to say to her: "If I could only have you in my congregation at Excelsior, Miss Carroll—"

"You could count one more hearer in addition to the large number you already have, couldn't you?" she responded, in the same merry tone, and then turned the conversation to some other point so skillfully that I found it impossible to make any farther effort in that direction; and I was compelled to return to Excelsior without any clearer understanding of her feelings toward me. But I am expecting to go there again in a few weeks to preach a sermon at the installation of my successor; and I am cherishing the hope that she will at least be ready to hear my avowal of love and devotion.

From Your Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

CHAPTER XXX.

WOOING AND WINNING.

At the appointed time Elwood took the cars for Beulah, with his installation sermon fully prepared for delivery.

He met a number of his friends at the depot and on the streets of the village, all of whom were greeted with his usual frankness and cordiality.

He had accepted the offer of Dr. and Mrs. Goodway's hospitality ; but he desired first to make a call on Allison. He found the latter poring over a volume of Emerson, which he was very ready to lay aside for a chat with Elwood.

"Glad to learn from the Excelsior papers how well you are getting along," was Allison's hearty expression as soon as their first greeting was concluded, "and I guess in this case you will allow me to say, 'I told you so.' I only wish your happiness was completed by a union—at least an engagement—with Miss Carroll."

In response to this, Elwood opened his bosom to Allison as freely as he had done to his mother, and reported the progress he had made.

As soon as he had concluded, Allison replied: "Elwood, these women's hearts are very hard to fathom. I would not be too confident about Miss Carroll's feeling toward you ; but if I am an interpreter at all, she cares more for you than she has ever given you reason to suppose."

"I have arranged to stay here a day or two after the installation and will probably call to see her," was Elwood's response.

"I have only one thing more to say, Elwood," continued Allison, after a few minutes' silence: "I don't claim that you are under any obligations to me in this matter—as the utmost I could claim would be that I relinquished what I did not possess and could never hope to obtain—but I showed my friendship and good-will, didn't I?"

"You surely did, Allison, and I shall appreciate your nobleness as long as I live, whatever be the outcome."

"I only ask," responded Allison, "that I shall always have your—I mean your united—respect and friendship."

"You shall certainly have mine; and I guess you know Alice Carroll well enough to feel in no danger of losing the high regard she has for you—whether she accepts me or not."

And, after a few minutes of general conversation, Elwood took his leave and hastened to Dr. Goodway's house.

His reception here was an overflow of sympathy and kindness. For some minutes the Doctor and Mrs. Goodway vied with each other in expressions of their pleasure and satisfaction at meeting him, and until the time came for the installation services in the evening, they continued to manifest their feelings in words of sincerest regard, interspersed, in Mrs. Goodway's case, with one or two very complimentary allusions to Alice Carroll, taking care not to couple the young woman's name too directly with Elwood's.

And, as a reward of her pains, she had the satisfaction

of seeing the color in Elwood's face and a slight drooping of his eyelids whenever Alice's name was mentioned.

The church was crowded at an early hour; and Elwood was at his best in the delivery of his sermon. The friendly, sympathetic faces of his old parishioners both rested and inspired him; and he greatly surprised his hearers by the increased breadth of thought and the intense spirituality that were manifest throughout the discourse.

Mr. Carroll and Alice were present; and Elwood not only had the satisfaction of her attention and interest in the sermon; but when he shook hands with her after the services, he thought he saw enough love and admiration in her eyes to justify an avowal of his feelings toward her before returning to Excelsior.

Was he mistaken?

After they had all retired for the night, Mrs. Goodway said to the Doctor: "Josiah, I don't believe Mr. Elwood and Alice will need any more help from me in reference to their acquaintance with each other. I never saw her face look so bright as it did while he was preaching to-night; and they shook hands so cordially after the services were over. He is going to stay a few days in Beulah, isn't he?"

"I think he said he would not return until day after to-morrow," was the Doctor's comforting answer—and they were soon asleep.

Mrs. Goodway could not resist her inclination to mention Alice's name again in the morning; but it was with less point and directness than the evening before. She saw no further color in Elwood's face; but the expression of his eyes satisfied her pretty well.

Elwood spent the forenoon in calling upon friends and acquaintances in different parts of the village. He received a number of invitations to dinner, and a still larger num-

ber to tea, but declined them all. He did this with the best grace possible; but he found it very hard to make the people see why the Goodways should be the only family he would permit to bestow its hospitality upon him. He might have plead "previous arrangements" with perfect truthfulness; but this would have raised curious inquiries that he was in no mood to answer.

Mrs. Goodway's dinner was prepared promptly at twelve o'clock; and Elwood asked to be excused immediately after it was over, as he had an engagement to see a friend at one o'clock. Mrs. Goodway noticed some embarrassment in his manner; but she wisely refrained from comment, keenly suspecting who the "friend" in question might be.

He rang the bell at Mr. Carroll's a few minutes before one, and found Alice ready for the stroll over the Beulah hills, which they had agreed upon. It was a fine May afternoon, the sun being out in full brightness, and the air just cool enough to be very refreshing.

The exercise of climbing the hills stirred their blood and brought a decided glow to their cheeks; but, as they took frequent rests, neither of them complained of weariness. After an hour or two's intense enjoyment in walking and viewing the river and surrounding country, they at length reached the hill where they both remembered that they first met "eight years ago this month." Instinctively they moved toward the tree under which they then sat. When they reached it they halted, and looked upon the scene about them in every direction, thrilling the while with mutual delight and entrancement!

O, that all wooers and lovers knew how to bask in the smiles of Mother Nature, as they seek to blend their hearts and lives together!

Presently they sat down on the grass, and presently after Elwood spoke:

"Miss Alice—may I call you Alice to-day?"

"That was the name by which I was first introduced to you," she gayly answered.

"Miss Alice," he continued, "it is just eight years since we met on this hill; but it seems to me everything around us looks just as it did then. There is the same river, the same trees, the same sky, the same flowers, the same green grass, and the same sun overhead."

"But we are each eight years older than we were then," she answered, in her brightest tone; and then after a short pause: "Mr. Elwood, will you gratify my curiosity by telling me why you were so anxious to discuss those grave educational problems with my father? Were you preparing your Commencement oration?"

Then he recounted to her all the experiences narrated in our first chapter, not forgetting the contents of his mother's letter received the same night; and finding her so interested in his history, he reviewed his three years' life in Union Seminary and New York city, following this with many experiences in his ministry not heretofore mentioned.

With rare piquancy, she likewise gave him a narration of her efforts to gain admission to Beulah College and the success that had attended them, stating with charming frankness, that her meeting with him and the conversation between him and her father had given to her her first aspiration for a higher education than she could secure in the public schools of Beulah.

"And your interest in that conversation has been in my memory all these eight years, but never so vividly as it is to-day."

He paused and looked very tenderly into her eyes, until he almost saw his image reflected in them; and, seizing her hands with a pressure that she did not resist, he said, in very soft tones: "I have never told you how

much pleasure I used to derive from your presence at my prayer meetings while I was in Beulah, nor how—”

“Perhaps it was a mutual pleasure?” she interrupted. She spoke with the rising inflection, but her voice was exquisitely clear.

“And I was profited and inspired as well as pleased,” he continued, with considerable warmth, “and when you came to hear me preach those few Sundays, the influence upon me was greater than I can describe.”

“Your sermons were very good, both before and after I attended,” she responded, with a very slight blush.

He paused a few moments, looking into her eyes very tenderly, and meeting a response that thrilled his every nerve and fiber.

“Miss Alice,” he said, with considerable tremor in his voice, but with a distinctness that could not fail to bring the blood to her face; “how I wish I could always have your presence in my church services—it would be such an inspiration to me!”

She smiled very pleasantly at this, but gave no other response; and he must needs speak more directly: “How I wish I could always have your counsel, your sympathy, your *love*—may I not hope for this in return for the love,” (pressing her hands more warmly,) “that I have given to you?—may I always call you my own, MY-OWN-DEAR-ALICE?”

She gave him a look of ineffable brightness, and, laying her head on his shoulder, softly answered, “MY DEAR HENRY!”

There was one firm, gentle clasp—one chaste kiss—and these two souls were henceforth and forever ONE!

Elwood was not required to explain his whereabouts during the afternoon to Mrs. Goodway when he returned to tea—she had seen and was satisfied!

She had not played the spy upon him in any manner;

but late in the afternoon she had happened to call at the house of a neighbor, who lived on the street by which they returned to Alice's home, and hearing peculiarly soft footsteps on the side-walk, and half guessing whose they were, she had gone to the window and gratified her innocent curiosity—only this, and nothing more !

She took care to make no sign of her knowledge to Elwood, but she could not help being very kind and gracious to him.

"I have a brief engagement this evening," he said, with manifest embarrassment, asking to be excused soon after they withdrew from the table.

"We hardly ever retire till ten o'clock, and sometimes later than that," was Mrs. Goodway's quick response.

How blissful were the two hours he spent with Alice after he again reached her house.

Surely her eyes were much brighter, her voice much sweeter, her dress more charming, her movements more graceful, because she was his own beloved !

"Henry," she said to him, as she smoothed his brow with her hand, "do you indeed want my sympathy in everything pertaining to your ministerial work ?"

"It is because I desired this, that I sought you so ardently, Alice ; and the interest you have already shown has been of very great value to me."

"You honored me so highly in consulting me as you did, that I was very glad to give you my sympathy and prayers."

"Have you, indeed, prayed for me, Alice ?"

"Every day since you went to Excelsior—and even before. I believe the Lord has answered my prayers, too," she said, very assuringly.

"O, Alice, what a treasure I have won !" he exclaimed.

"Don't be too certain about that ; but I shall always

count it my highest privilege to share in your work. I want to adore your eloquence and to pray for you without ceasing."

"But how can I ever reward you, Alice. Such devotion as yours demands a much greater return than I can hope to give you!"

"I only ask your kindness and your love, and"—assuming her most cheering and encouraging tone—"you will always be such a noble and eloquent preacher!"

"I could not help striving to do the best work of which I am capable, with such a dear little woman always near me," he responded, with a fond caress.

After talking over many points of interest in connection with his professional duties, he arose to depart, informing her that he should take the early train for Excelsior in the morning.

They lingered but a few moments in the hall for words and signs of parting—of what fine ethereal substance seemed her hand as he measured her finger for the ring she was to wear!—was there another sacred kiss as they separated?

Elwood's heart beat high as the train steamed out of the village in the morning; but he was no happier than Alice.

What maiden does not rejoice to be wooed and won by the man she adores?

CHAPTER XXXI.

WORK AND WORRY.

“Vernon, I am seriously afraid if these doubts concerning the Confession of Faith continue much longer, I shall have to come to you for some remedy from *materia medica*. They are taking hold of my nerves and tissues, as well as my mental and spiritual consciousness.”

It was thus that Henry Elwood addressed his friend Vernon, in the latter's office, at a late hour one Saturday night, a few weeks after Elwood's return from Beulah. [He had spent several hours that day considering the question how it could be just to punish an innocent person for the sins of the guilty; and his sermon for the next day was not yet completed.]

“I know what course I would have thought necessary some years ago,” was Vernon's reply, spoken so sadly, that Elwood regretted introducing the subject.

There was silence between them for some minutes, and then Vernon continued, in a less heavy tone: “I really wish I could help you out of your difficulty; but I know of no way to escape the disease—if I may call it such—under which you are suffering, so long as you are an honest man!”

“I would like to call myself honest, Vernon; but if my people knew all my doubts, wouldn't they lose all confidence in me and ask me to resign before I preach another sermon!”

“And suppose you would retire from the ministry,

what business or profession would you expect to find in which you would not meet the same or similar difficulties? It would not be medicine—but I have already given you my professional experience and need not repeat it. It would not be the law, I am equally certain; and I guess it is the same in every business or occupation of life.”

“You remind me,” said Elwood, “of what I read in Carlyle some time ago, where he says that the truly sincere man must not be conscious of his sincerity, but rather of *insincerity*. I never thought, however, of making a personal application of the remark, as I supposed it referred only to the ‘heroes’ of whom he was discoursing.”

“I have read too little of Carlyle,” said Vernon, “to be an interpreter of his meaning; but there seems to be something in his remark that applies to both your case and mine—and that too without our pretending to be ‘heroes,’ or anything of the sort.”

“I don’t want to consider myself a ‘hero,’” said Elwood,; but I would like above all things else to be an honest and sincere man; and surely no man is justified in being insincere—especially in the pulpit.”

Vernon made no reply to this, but presently asked: “Did you see Clara Martin while you were in Beulah?”

“No, I did not, Vernon,” was the reply, spoken very regretfully, “and I must confess that I even forgot to inquire about her.”

“For which failure you are surely to be excused, in view of the peculiar circumstances, and especially in view of the fact that I sent no message of inquiry; but, Elwood, you have not yet told me when you and Miss Carroll are to be married.”

“No time has been set yet; but I know she would prefer to wait a year or two.”

“Since you have signified some desire to have me

prescribe for you, let me say that your case has reached a somewhat critical stage, and that you need a woman's wit and wisdom and sympathy more than everything else"—Elwood knew not how much of his own inner consciousness Vernon was revealing—"and if Miss Carroll's whole soul is devoted to your work, she might be able to relieve your mind of these doubts, at least relieve you of the worry and anxiety that now trouble you so seriously—much more seriously than you suppose. You can do a vast amount of work, Elwood, but beware of worry—and loneliness. I will give you a 'physician's certificate,' if you desire it, that you need her presence and sympathy. But she will take your word for it; women are always ready to go where they are needed and called—and what nurses they are for sick minds as well as sick bodies! Do not understand me, however, to pronounce you a chronic invalid. I only fear—I know—that it will be very hard for you to discharge all your duties and solve all the problems before you *alone*.

"And it will also be very hard for me to preach two sermons to-morrow unless I get some sleep to night," said Elwood, a little playfully, as he rose to take his leave; "but your prescription is worth considering, Vernon, and I am very grateful for it."

Two or three months after the above conversation, Elwood received by the same mail a letter from his mother, and one from his betrothed, both of which are herewith presented to the reader, his mother's first:

ARCADIA, September —, 1880.

MY DEAR HENRY:

I am much interested in every thing you write concerning Excelsior and the people of your church. What a task is laid upon you in keeping up an acquaintance with so many persons and preaching to them twice every Sunday.

I wish very much that I could help you dispose of your theo-

logical doubts ; but never having had any such experience myself, I can only again commend you to the Spirit of all Truth. It seems to me that your difficulty in understanding such doctrines as the Atonement and the Trinity ought not to interfere in any manner with your preaching the Gospel to the people and serving them as a true and faithful minister. You have noticed, haven't you? that Jesus never troubled himself about doctrines, but went about doing good and teaching the people ; and that is what I have no doubt you are striving to do and will continue to do.

How fortunate you were, Henry, in securing Miss Carroll's promise to marry you. Although I have never met her, I almost feel as if I were well acquainted with her ; for, in addition to all you have told me about her, she has written to me two or three times, stating that you had requested her to do so.

Her letters to me are very interesting and charming, and as full of tenderness and affection as I can expect. And such interest as she manifests in your ministry ! such an appreciation of your talents ! I have always felt anxious for you to secure a wife who would be highly devoted to you and your work, but I never dreamed of such interest and devotion as she manifests.

Mr. Edwards says he still has confidence that you will master your theological doubts without falling into error and unbelief. I believe you will do so, too ; but I can see from the tone of your letters that they are troubling you more than you are willing to acknowledge, perhaps more than you yourself think ; and, as there is no one in Excelsior to whom you can fully express your thoughts and feelings, I am afraid your trouble on this account will interfere with your ministerial work, if it does not injure your health.

You say that you are not expecting to marry for a year or two ; but I believe that if your Alice understood that you needed her presence—and that is what you do need, Henry—she would not refuse to be married sooner. I give you this suggestion because your letters indicate that you are considerably troubled, and I know she would do anything you might ask to help and relieve you.

From Your Affectionate Mother,

EMMA ELWOOD.

And likewise this from Alice :

BEULAH, September —, 1880.

MY DEAR HENRY:

The habit of writing to you on Sunday afternoons having once been formed, will probably be continued for a long time to come, unless some monitor appeals to my conscience and bids me desist—you will not be that monitor, will you ?

I have never written to you how dear Mrs. Goodway overwhelmed me with caresses and congratulations as soon as she found out that our engagement was a certain thing, which was only a short time ago. The Doctor, too, grasped both my hands and shook them warmly, and seemed almost inclined to salute me with a holy kiss—that is what Mrs. Goodway does every time she meets me.

And if you were their own son, Henry, they could hardly admire you more than they do, or feel a greater interest in your ministry.

I believe I have written to you before that Mr. Allison was paying considerable attention to Blanche Jordan. You could have no idea what an effect it has had on her conversational powers. She always seemed deficient in that respect, but her association with Mr. Allison has brought out a latent faculty that I never thought she possessed in such a large measure. I suppose the burden of care, that used to be on her mind, kept down her spirits and made her seem less “witty and wise” than she really was. I think, too, that Mr. Allison appreciates the almost magical effect his conversation has had upon her, and that he enjoys her society much more than he would be willing to confess—but perhaps he has written all this and much more to you!

And Blanche—but I am not going to tell you how far she has confided in me. You won’t blame her for doing so; and I am equally certain that you won’t blame me for letting her know how proud I am to wear your ring—SYMBOL OF ETERNITY!—upon my hand, and how I cherish your name in my heart of hearts!

How grateful I felt to you, Henry, for making no formal avowal of your love to me before I was ready to reciprocate your feelings and give you the answer you desired. I *never* wanted to “say you nay;” neither did I want to say “yes” until I felt certain that we were indeed “two souls moved by a single thought, and two hearts that beat as one;” although I believe we were each conscious of some affinity for the other from the day of our first meeting!

If you waited longer than was entirely agreeable to you, I will try to compensate you by greater love and devotion as long as we live—you believe in the “law of compensation,” don’t you? Perhaps I did not wish to wait any longer, either! At any rate, I was ready for your proposal when it came. The time, the place, the manner and the MAN were all acceptable; and you could not possibly have interpreted my wishes and feelings more clearly than you did. Was my answer all that you desired, or shall I say more when we meet again?

It is not very easy for me to answer your question whether you should write your sermons or preach *extempore*. I have heard you preach in both ways, and I can only say, in the language of John Gay,

“How happy could I be with either,
Were 'tother dear charmer away.”

Wouldn't it be well for you to give your congregation the advantage of both methods in about equal measure?—I know you are equal to both!

Clara Martin's father is preaching at the village of Bostonia, which is about fifty miles from Excelsior. I have greatly missed her, but I hear from her quite often. Her last letter stated that her father's health was very poor, and that he expected to retire from active work in the ministry in a year or two, and that if he did so, he would probably move to Excelsior and spend the rest of his days in that city. Clara has never fully recovered from the effects of her estrangement from Homer Vernon, and nothing will ever satisfy her except to take an active part in some reformatory or benevolent work. I shall be very glad to find her in Excelsior when the time comes to make the city my home, and perhaps she and Dr. Vernon might yet—but I won't pretend to prophesy about that!

I am attending church very regularly; but highly as I admire our Episcopal liturgy, especially as rendered by Mr. Allison, I shall not be unwilling to change my connection to a church where the preaching is more prominent—I mean *your* preaching, Henry!

I can not quite understand how you expect me to assist you in solving those hard theological problems that trouble you so. I have no “excellent spirit,” like the prophet Daniel, for the “interpreting of dreams and showing of hard sentences and dissolving of doubts;” neither must you expect me to “reason high of fate, foreknowledge and free will;” but my heart and soul are all in your ministry, and I would ask no higher honor than to share in all your burdens and trials.

Are you not greatly worrying as well as working, Henry? I do not want to see any of your gifts and powers wasted in this way when they should all be used in grand and noble work—and would not your people say this, too?

I would prefer not to marry for some time yet; but knowing, as I do, what a task is upon your shoulders, I can not refuse whatever you ask; and if you continue to feel, as you say you now feel, the need of my presence and sympathy, you will find me

Your Ever Affectionate and Devoted

ALICE.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MARRIED AND MATED.

On Christmas day, 1880, in the presence of a large circle of admiring friends, Herbert Allison—Doctor Goodway participating in the ceremony—solemnly pronounced Henry Elwood and Alice Carroll husband and wife.

Their “bridal tour” embraced a trip to New York and other eastern cities, and also a journey to Arcadia, where they spent a week visiting Henry’s mother and calling upon old friends and acquaintances.

What intense pleasure Alice felt in wandering over the fields and hills and woods, that had been marked by the steps of his boyhood, and how he delighted to recount to her the various experiences of his early years.

They were in New York over Sunday; and, as naturally as the needle is drawn by the magnet, they crossed East river at an early hour, and made their way to Plymouth church. This time they sat in the same pew, and with eyes a little closer together than they realized. Elwood’s appreciation of Mr. Beecher’s discourse was very high; but Alice’s power of penetration and interpretation surprised him beyond all previous experience, and lifted him to the seventh heaven of delight.

“Henry,” she said to him, as they sat in their room at the hotel in the afternoon, “can you tell Mr. Beecher’s ‘secret?’”

“No, I can not,” he answered, with enthusiasm; “it is like the flavor of an apple or the fragrance of a

flower; it defies all analysis or definition—how I wish I could preach as he does!”

“No, no, Henry,” she said, laying her hand on his forehead, and looking very admiringly into his face; “do not covet Mr. Beecher’s gifts, *but use your own!* If you fully consecrate yourself, you do not know what great work the Lord may enable you to do. You will find at least one person who would rather hear you preach than even Mr. Beecher!”

Did any theological doubts oppress his consciousness at that moment?

In the afternoon, they visited the Mission Sunday School, of which Elwood had charge while in the Seminary. Their walk to the place gave Alice her first actual view of the poverty and degradation of a great city.

“Is there any thing like this in Excelsior?” she inquired, as they noted the many signs of suffering and destitution on the street.

“Not quite so extensive, not quite so bad, but very much like it.”

“How long do you think it will be before the poor shall indeed have the Gospel preached to them, Henry?”

“That question has perplexed me a great deal, Alice, but I have never been able to answer it.”

“It is a more serious question than even your theological doubts, isn’t it?” she asked, very sympathetically.

“Perhaps it is, Alice; but they are very oppressive; and if it were not for you, I would not know how to endure them.”

“‘For the trial of your faith worketh patience,’ Henry!” she responded, with her brightest look.

There was no small degree of curiosity on the part of the congregation the Sunday after they returned to Excelsior to see the minister’s bride.

She walked up the aisle to her pew by her husband’s

side, with easy and graceful carriage, perfectly natural and free from affectation of every sort. Her dress was quite becoming, but betokened no desire for show, her hair being smoothly combed, and thereby most truly adorning her bright and elegant forehead. Her face wore its usual open and pleasing aspect, and she showed no sign of trepidation or embarrassment in view of all the eyes that were directed toward her—and yet no affectation of indifference. She might, or might not, be called beautiful, according to the taste and standard of the beholder; but she *assumed* no beauty or charm that she did not possess; and the brightness of her eyes and the glow of her cheeks revealed healthy digestion, full breathing, and a merry heart amid all the experiences of life.

As they sat in their rooms in the afternoon—they were boarding at the hotel, having made no arrangements for housekeeping—Elwood said: “Alice, Herbert Allison told me once that you had given him a very valuable suggestion in reference to special study of the Episcopal service before rendering it each Sunday—would it not apply to my formal services as well?”

“Indeed, Henry, you read your hymns and Scriptural lesson in a very acceptable manner to-day.”

“But could not my reading have been very much improved?”

“I will not assume the ungracious office of critic the first Sunday of my residence in your ‘parish,’ even if you do request it—but have you selected your hymns and Scriptural lesson for to-night?”

“I have,” he replied, taking his Bible and hymn book in his hands. “I am going to read the first chapter of Genesis, and my first hymn is an old and familiar one, ‘When I survey the wondrous cross.’”

“Can you not make them new and fresh by studying

them before the service and thereby prepare your audience for the sermon?"

He opened the Bible and read aloud the first three verses of Genesis:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the 'earth.

"And the earth was without form and void, and 'darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the 'Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters.

"And God said, Let there be light; and there was 'light!"

He paused at this point and looked into her face, inquiringly.

"Read the same verses in a still lower tone," she quietly suggested.

He began again and read the entire chapter without farther comment, his conception of every passage being greatly quickened by her fine appreciation.

"How much beauty and sublimity there is in this chapter!" he exclaimed, as soon as he had concluded.

"Whether it be history or poetry," she quickly responded; "and I believe you can read it so it will inspire the people, and then they will know it is inspired by the Spirit of God. You can read it so they will feel that God always creates the heavens and the earth, for those who fear him and love him—that his Spirit always moves on the face of the waters, for those who desire the Spirit's work and influence—and that he always says, 'Let there be light,' for those who seek the light!"

Handing her the open hymn-book, he asked her to read the hymn, but, instead of reading it, she sang in a low, rich tone:

"When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

* * * * *

"I have read that hymn a great many times, Alice, but you have given me a new conception, not only of its sublime poetry, but of the lesson of humility and self-sacrifice it teaches."

"What a beautiful hymn that was you read to-night about the 'wondrous cross,' and how grateful we ought to feel to Jesus for all he has suffered in our behalf," said a lame and feeble woman of sixty years, whose life had been one of hard toil from her earliest childhood, to Elwood, as she came forward to shake hands with him after the benediction.

And Gibbert, the tailor, also met him at the church door, with the remark: "I never thought that fable about the creation of the world was so interesting—perhaps those old Bible stories mean something, after all!"

These were *among* the expressions of appreciation of the services that he heard before he left the church.

As soon as they reached their rooms, Major Collins and Mr. Harris—the latter of whom, it will be remembered was elected an elder of the church during Arthur Raymond's pastorate—knocked at the door, but declined to come in, stating that they had merely called to request Mr. Elwood not to purchase or rent a house at present, as the Trustees were considering the propriety of securing a parsonage.

"The only question in our minds," said Collins, with his usual overflow of heartiness, "is, whether it would be better to put up a new building, or purchase one near the church that is offered at a reasonable price. We will consult you and Mrs. Elwood about it, and decide in a very few days."

Soon after Collins and Harris took their departure, Alice asked: "Henry, is the Mr. Simpkinson, to whom, with his wife, you introduced me to-day, the man you

have told me owns so many buildings in the part of the city they call 'Egypt?' "

"Yes, Alice, and because he is one of the elders of my church, I have been very much perplexed concerning my duty in reference to him. He certainly ought to know what the people say about the way he treats his tenants, but I have never seen my way clear to tell him."

"It would be very easy for you to offend him, without doing his tenants any good," she answered, very thoughtfully; "but your duty will some time be made clear to you, and perhaps you can make him *see* wherein he is wrong, and thereby be of some service both to his tenants and himself. His wife seems such a meek and kind-hearted woman—I don't believe *she* would want to obtain riches by oppressing the poor."

The next morning Elwood received the following letter from his mother:

ARCADIA, January —, 1881.

MY DEAR HENRY:

I wish I had time to write to you the many words of praise I have heard for your precious Alice from those who saw her while you were here during the holidays.

Mr. Edwards says that *if* anything had been needed to secure the success of your ministry in Excelsior, it was a union with such a charming and excellent woman, and that you can never depart from the right path in your preaching while she is at your side!

And such a daughter as *I* have gained! High as my expectations were, they were more than realized. What a rare gift she has of continually surprising every one with her vivacity of manner and clearness of expression. And how quickly she takes hold of one's affection! The very first day I spent with her, I think I became as much attached to her as if I had known her all my life!

And O, Henry, such devotion to you and your work as she manifested! You may think you appreciate her sympathy and helpfulness; but you have only begun to do so, at best.

But need I remind you, that if you would realize the full blessedness of the marriage relation, the wife as well as the maiden must be *respected*—that your spirit and manner towards her should always be most thoughtful, gentle and considerate—that your man-

liness and self-discipline should never fail you—that you should prize her fine insight above all earthly treasures—and that you should bind her love and sympathy as a chain of gold about your neck continually?

There will be no sacrifice of manly dignity in all this; on the contrary, she will reward you with an ever-increasing devotion, and with constant surprises of “sweetness and light!”

From Your Affectionate Mother,

EMMA ELWOOD.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TENANTS AND TENEMENTS.

At twelve o'clock one night about the middle of January, there was a loud ringing of fire-bells throughout the city of Excelsior; and the newspaper which was brought to Elwood's door the next morning, announced, under flaming head-lines, that there had been a great conflagration in "Egypt," attended with the loss of several lives and a number of remarkable escapes from the devouring flames.

Whatever "loss of life" may have occurred in that locality from sickness or cold or partial starvation for several years past, it had received little or no attention from the news gatherers, because things of that kind were so usual; but when the horrors of death by fire were brought to the eyes and ears of the enterprising reporters, they rightly judged that they had an "item," which people would want to read in as highly colored style as it was possible to employ in presenting it.

Two or three columns of the paper were taken up with an account of the fire, describing its progress from building to building, the heroic efforts of the firemen to extinguish it, with numerous incidents more or less exciting. The manner in which the five victims of the fire—one man, two women and two children—were blinded and crazed by the smoke was pictured very graphically; and their shrieks in the midst of the flames that surrounded them were truthfully described as "thrilling and heart-rending."

And at the end of the account was this statement: "The legal authorities are taking steps to investigate the construction of these buildings with a view to ascertain whether there has been any violation of the law providing for fire escapes in tenement houses of more than two stories in height. It is to be hoped that if the owner of these building is responsible for the loss of these lives, he will not escape the punishment that the law provides."

Elwood read the article to Alice, and as soon as he had concluded she said to him:

"Deacon Simpkinson will be seriously troubled about this publication, Henry, whether he has violated the law or not, and he will no doubt want your counsel before he is through with it. This may be the time for you to tell him what you think his duty is in reference to his tenants."

Elwood had an errand at Gibbert's store soon after breakfast, and found the latter's face unusually animated. The paper containing the account of the fire laid on the table, and handing it to Elwood, he said in his peculiarly expressive manner: "One of your rich deacons has got himself into trouble. Shouldn't wonder if he would have a chance to work a little for the public as well as compel so many other people to work to make him rich."

"I have seen the article," quietly remarked Elwood, "and have been deeply pained to learn of the loss of life, and besides, I fear several families have been turned out of doors!"

"Devilish little old Simpkinson will care for the families being turned out of doors or for the five people burned to death, either—unless he is afraid of the law. I hope it will cost him a few thousands of what he has made out of other people's labor to get out of the scrape, anyhow!"

"You don't mean to say that Mr. Simpkinson has

made his money dishonestly?" asked Elwood, rather nervously.

"How the d—l can any man make a million dollars—that's what they say Simpkinson is worth—without taking it nearly all from other people? He may not have robbed any body, but he's got more than his share several times over; and when you see one man as rich as he is, the Lord only knows how many have to be poor on his account."

"You say you do not know any one that he has ever robbed; how, then, do you claim that so many others are poor on his account?"

"How much of his money did he ever *earn*?—that's what I would like to know; and since he never earned more than a very small portion of it, doesn't it follow that all the rest of it was earned by other people? and hasn't he got what justly belongs to the men who earned it? But I suppose ignorance and superstition will always rule the world, and that the more money the rich man can coin out of the sweat of the poor, the lower they will bow to him!"

“ But, Gibbert, are you certain that even if an equal distribution of goods could be secured and *maintained*, such a condition would be desirable? If no man could obtain more than what you call his ‘share,’ would there not be an end to all enterprise and all progress?—almost an end to all wealth? Is it not better for the good of *all*, that there should be more or less concentration of wealth in the hands of men who know how to manage it? ”

"That is a very comfortable argument for one who is drawing a fat salary for his work," replied Gibbert; "but I guess if you were one of the poor wretches living down in 'Egypt,' you couldn't see how it was any advantage to you that Deacon Simpkinson owned so much property, while you would never know where the next meal

was coming from, nor how soon you might be turned out in the street?"

"All that doesn't prove," replied Elwood, "that there are not some advantages to be derived from the concentration of wealth; but what I do wish is that all men who own property, whether it be in large or small amounts, would consider themselves as stewards of what they possess and strive to use it for the good of others."

"You'll never get Deacon Simpkinson to do anything of that kind," replied Gibbert; "he 'wants the earth,' and he wants it all for himself!"

"But, Gibbert, whatever spirit Deacon Simpkinson may manifest in reference to his property, we ought to remember the Scripture which says, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth.' Your life and mine may be made just as valuable and just as noble as if we were possessed of as much property as Mr. Simpkinson."

"I wouldn't be as close and mean as he is for all he's worth, anyhow!" replied Gibbert, very incisively.

Six months afterward Elwood wrote to his mother:

EXCELSIOR, July —, 1881.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

Alice has been reminding me for some days past that your last letter remains unanswered, which neglect must continue no longer.

* * * * *

If there were no other difficulty concerning theological questions than my inability to understand the doctrines of the church, I could easily bring my mind to a state of rest and peace; but my case is one of serious doubt, if not of disbelief. It is, at best, very hard for me to believe that Christ suffered the wrath of God for our sins; and that there is one God composed of three separate persons; and, at times, I find myself considering the question whether we are bound to believe every thing in the Bible merely because it is written there.

Alice tells me nearly every day that my efforts to solve these doubts are making a much better preacher of me, and that I should not be unwilling to have my conscience exercised in this

way, as it needs exercise as well as my mind or my body. She also insists that the large congregations I have, and the increase in the church membership, are at least proofs that the people do not account me an untrue or an unfaithful minister, and that I will not be condemned, if I continue to seek the right course.

I have derived great benefit from Robertson's principle that all truth should be presented in a positive, rather than a negative form. I always seek to preach just what I do believe to the people; but I fear I do not deserve the credit for earnestness and sincerity that they give me.

I believe I have never written to you about Major Collins, who is one of the leading members of my church. Alice and I have dined at his house once or twice, and his friendship and generosity to me seem to know no bounds. Mrs. Collins is very precise and formal in her manners; but she and all her family are very much attached to Alice. Their oldest boy, Fred, belongs to her Sunday School class; and they have two very bright twin girls, about four years old, who love her, I was going to say, more than they love their mother. They are never so happy as when they are brought to our rooms, where they will frequently stay all day with perfect contentment.

I must also write to you with reference to Deacon Simpkinson, who, as I have told you before, owns so many houses in the part of Excelsior that they call "Egypt." When the fire occurred last winter, in which five persons were burned to death, the authorities were strongly inclined to prosecute him for not providing fire escapes in the buildings that had been burned; but when the Prosecutor investigated the whole matter, he came to the conclusion that no case could be made against him in law, however much he may have been to blame morally.

He came to me for advice at the very outset, being in great distress on account of the criticisms of the newspapers and of the public, and pleading that such matters were an "annoyance" that he could hardly endure. And he seemed to expect me to relieve him of this because I was his pastor? It was not very easy for me to determine just what I ought to say to him; but, fortunately, Alice was present at several of our interviews, and, in some way, she assisted me to put the matter before him in such a light, that he was induced to contribute quite liberally to the relief of the families who had been burned out, and also to give some consideration to the question of his obligations to his other tenants.

What a rare faculty Alice has of always helping people to see what is right!

Afterward, when I found I had his full confidence, I suggested

a number of ways in which I thought he could make his other tenants more comfortable. He objected, at first, to all repairs and improvements, on account of high taxes and the carelessness of tenants; but I gradually acquired such an influence over him that he would do almost anything I suggested, and would even come to me occasionally for advice as to what I thought he ought to do for the comfort and convenience of some of his tenants. He would also ask Vernon's medical advice about ventilation, drainage and other points relating to the healthy condition of his buildings.

Of course, he has not done all that I think he ought to do for his tenants; but he has made a good many of them more comfortable than they were, and I believe he will do still more in that direction. We all need time to learn the lessons of life, and a minister must be careful not to lose patience with his people because they learn their duty so slowly.

I am giving considerable time to such authors as Herbert Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Renan and others, not neglecting my biblical and theological studies. Alice has given me great encouragement in this respect, insisting that I could not possibly be equipped for my work without being "up" in all the literature and philosophy of the day.

In connection with my studies, rather as a necessary part of them, I have taken frequent drives and walks into the country, sometimes with Alice and sometimes alone, and have spent many profitable hours in quiet converse with our dear Mother Nature. And O, how clearly she speaks to me of the wisdom and mercy and goodness of God! How *spiritual* she is when we become truly acquainted with her!

I wish I could tell you how much the people of Excelsior think of Alice. Her presence is welcomed alike by the rich and the poor; and I do not believe that any one has ever noticed the slightest difference in the courtesy and attention that she shows to all classes of people. And, whatever differences and divisions there may be among them, they are *united* in their love and admiration of her. Scarcely a day passes that some of my members do not speak a word of praise concerning her in my ears; but none of them know her worth as I do!

Our new parsonage will be completed in a few weeks, and then we shall expect a very long visit from *our* mother.

From Your Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PRAYER AND PROVIDENCE.

The bullet of a crazy assassin had struck down the President of the United States; and, after several weeks of wasting and suffering, his life had gone out, despite all the prayers that had been offered in his behalf.

It can not be said that Henry Elwood's faith was severely "shocked" by this event, this seeming mockery of the promises of the Scripture; for he had expressed the opinion some time before the lamented President's death, that if he were mortally wounded, the prayers of the nation would not save his life; but he was considerably perplexed as to the *interpretation* of the mysterious providence that he should offer to his people the following Sunday.

"Why should you expect fully to understand this mystery when you can not comprehend the life of the lowest animal or the essence of a single blade of grass?" asked Alice, as she gently caressed his brow.

"But, Alice, the people will expect me to preach upon it, and I feel that I ought to give them some message."

After a few moments' silence, she quietly answered: "Henry, I will give you a text for the occasion, if you will promise to preach from it."

"I am very safe in promising anything you ask, my dear Alice."

"She opened the Bible that was lying on the table

near them, and read: "When ye pray say, Our Father."

As she spoke the words with a full cadence of voice, he looked at her inquiringly, expecting to hear the remainder of the Lord's prayer, or at least a portion of it; but, instead of giving him this, she closed the book and returned it to the table.

"Is that all, Alice?"

"That is enough for one sermon, isn't it?" she answered, very brightly. "This text will require as much study and preparation as any that you ever preached from. The people expect a message from you, and you ought to give them a message both of comfort and inspiration."

"Can you give me any ideas and suggestions upon this text, Alice?"

"I have given you the text; you must furnish the sermon yourself," she answered, with a very encouraging smile.

In the afternoon, as Elwood was passing by Gibbert's store, he heard the latter say, in the hearing of two or three men who were standing by the door: "I should think this death of Garfield would show people the folly and superstition of praying. Why, there were enough prayers offered for him to have saved a million lives, if prayer could have any effect. It's confounded strange people can not learn to mind their own business, and let the Almighty—if there is any such person—alone!"

"I believe in prayer," said one of the men, "even if it wasn't the Lord's will for Mr. Garfield to get well. The Bible is full of promises to all who pray in faith, and I have always found them to be true."

"But all your faith and all your prayers won't give bread to a man that is hungry, or fire to one that is freezing," replied Gibbert, very emphatically. "If we could get what we want by praying, what would be the use of our working so infernal hard for a living? Why does your

“God permit so much pain and misery in the world, if he is ready to answer people’s prayers for whatever they wish?”

“He doesn’t give us whatever we wish,” responded the same man: “he gives us the things that are according to his will, not ours.”

“Then what is the use of your bothering him about it at all? Besides if he is as good as you say he is, he has a very peculiar way of showing it to some of his creatures.”

Can Henry Elwood listen to such utterances as these without losing faith in the Eternal Providence that it is his office and business to preach to men?

Has he yet learned that the light-house by the sea-shore must be built so strong that it will stand against all the waves that may beat against it?

In the evening, Elwood had a call from Professor Humboldt, of the State University located at Excelsior. The Professor was an attendant at the First church, although not a communicant; and being a man of very clever conversational powers, he not unfrequently spent an evening with Elwood and Alice, on which occasions a considerable variety of topics was considered and discussed. His *forte*, however, was physical science, in which he was thoroughly versed. He believed in the “laws of Nature,” the “correlation of forces,” the “survival of the fittest,” and so on; but, although he respected Christianity as an *institution*, he could see nothing “scientific” in either its doctrines or its services. 7

He appreciated the dead President’s genius and character and sincerely regretted his death, but still he could not help feeling that the failure to save his life by prayer was in the nature of a triumph of “science” over “superstition,” and, in the course of the evening’s conversation, expressed himself somewhat to that effect.

“Why, Professor, you don’t think there was any

thing unscientific in the prayers of the people for Mr. Garfield's recovery, do you?" asked Alice.

"I don't know that I should call them either scientific or unscientific," he answered, "but it is very clear that they utterly failed of their object; and that ought to convince us that we can accomplish nothing except by acting in strict harmony with the laws of Nature. It is astonishing, however, how much superstition still remains in the world, notwithstanding the great progress we have made in science and civilization."

"The mere fact that these prayers failed of their object doesn't prove that they are born of 'superstition,' does it?" she next asked.

"Perhaps not; but can it be shown that *any* prayer accomplishes its object—brings about a result that would not have been produced without it?"

"In other words," she pleasantly responded, "you say, 'Show me a sign from heaven, and I will believe;' but no sign shall be given unto you—not even the sign of the prophet Jonas!"

As the Professor made no immediate reply to this, Elwood presently said: "Why is it, Professor, that so many scientists and philosophers seem to ignore the religious instinct in man? Is not this instinct as 'scientific' a thing—I mean as *real* a thing—as any fact or object in Nature? Is it not as real a thing as the law of gravitation?"

"There is more or less tendency to acts of religious devotion among all classes of people; but I believe it is born of their fears and their weaknesses; and the more educated and enlightened society becomes, the less there is of it. First, we had the age of faith, then of philosophy or speculation, and now we are approaching, if we have already reached, the age of scientific fact."

"But can the mind of man ever be satisfied with mere

external phenomena?" asked Elwood. "Is there not something in us that makes us strive to comprehend the unseen and the invisible? Is it not as natural for us to feel that we are related to the Essence—the Soul—of all things, which is God, as it is to feel that our bodies are related to the earth on which we stand?"

"But even if that were admitted," replied the Professor, "it does not follow that we can accomplish whatever we wish, or set aside the laws of Nature by our prayers."

"Can we accomplish whatever we wish by exercising *any* function of our nature?" Alice here inquired. And as the Professor made no immediate reply, she soon continued: "Must not every force that we exercise bear its proper relation to all other forces? Must not our prayers take their proper place in the Divine order and economy?"

"I am ready to admit the efficacy of prayer whenever it can be demonstrated," he answered: "but until that is done I can see no use in our attempting to disturb the order of the Universe with any of our petitions. We can not change the laws of Nature in any respect, or suspend their operation for a single moment."

In response to this, she asked permission to read an extract from "Robertson's Sermons," to which the Professor and Elwood both listened with intense interest—so clear and expressive were the notes of her voice:

"Pray then, as Christ did, till your prayer makes you
"cease praying. Pray till you forget your own wish and
"leave it or merge it in God's will. The divine wisdom
"has given us prayer, not as a means whereby to obtain the
"good things of earth, but as a means whereby we learn
"to do without them; not as a means whereby we escape
"evil, but as a means whereby we become strong to meet
"it. 'There appeared unto him an angel from heaven
"strengthening him.' That was the reply to Christ's

“prayer. * * Then the selfish cry of egotism being silenced, we obtain Job’s sublime spirit, ‘Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?’

“There is one objection that may be made to this. It may be said, I have lost all I prized. It is sad and depressing to think that prayer will alter nothing and bring nothing that I wish.

“But one word in reply. You have lost the certainty of getting your own wish; you have gotten instead the compensation of knowing that the best possible, best for you, best for all, will be accomplished.”

As the Professor offered no comments on this, the conversation turned to a discussion of the dead President’s career and character, which was continued for the remainder of the evening.

On Sunday afternoon, as Elwood and Alice were sitting together in one of the city parks, she said to him: “Henry, do you regret the thought and labor you expended on the preparation of your sermon this morning?”

“No, Alice; the close attention the people gave me, and the interest they manifested was a tenfold reward for all my labor in preparing the discourse.”

“It seemed to me you reached their hearts as never before, and while you were reading the opening hymn, ‘God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform,’ I noticed quite a number wiping the tears from their eyes. You read it with such feeling as to make it almost equal to a sermon.”

“Did I make my views of prayer clear, Alice?”

“They were certainly very clear to me, and I think the audience understood you, too.” And, after a short pause, she continued: “Henry, you have often expressed the fear that you were not wholly orthodox upon the sub-

ject of prayer, and have seriously doubted your right to occupy a Presbyterian pulpit with such views as you have; but to-day you stated that because God is our Father, he hears *all* our prayers, and answers them according to his wisdom and goodness!"

"That is what I believe, Alice; I can come to no other conclusion; we exercise the function that belong to us as his children—and it is certainly the highest and noblest function of our nature—and as he is infinitely wise and perfect and good, we can not fail to secure the proper result. If wise earthly parents try to give the proper answer to their children's requests, will not our Heavenly Father do the same for us?"

"And didn't you say, Henry, that when we are in the right state of mind toward God, all things that come to pass are providential?"

"Yes. Alice; and I believe that, too!"

"I thought you made it very clear that prayer consisted in vital communion with God, rather than in obtaining any special favor from him, and that, paradoxical as it might seem, the efficacy of all our prayers depended on our perfect submission to the Divine will."

"That is what I sought to impress upon the people's minds, and upon my own mind also."

"Then it seems to me," she responded, in a very encouraging tone, "that you are more orthodox in your views of prayer than orthodoxy itself; and perhaps you will see in due time, that you believe more of the truth contained in the Confession of Faith than even Professor Ironsides! If you can attain a larger and more spiritual view of prayer, why should you not do the same with the Trinity, the Atonement, the Inspiration of the Bible, and the other doctrines of the Confession?"

"Alice," he said, in reply, "I have also been studying the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice in connection with

President Garfield's death; and it has brought a great many thoughts and suggestions to mind, besides all that I expressed in my sermon. Was he not killed because he was the President of the people? Was not President Lincoln killed for the same reason? And did not more than three hundred thousand soldiers fall as a sacrifice upon the altar of their country during the late war? Whether Christ bore the wrath of God for our sins in a legal sense or not, it is very certain that his life and his death were alike an example of self-sacrifice, and that all men must suffer more or less for others."

"And therefore you won't have to be burned or excommunicated for heresy on account of your views of the Atonement, especially if you put the spirit of Christ's sacrifice into your preaching and your LIFE," she responded with a bright smile, and after a few moments continued: "I forgot to tell you that I received a letter from Clara Martin yesterday while you were out," stating that her father was going to move to Excelsior next spring, and also one from Blanche Jordan, in which she says that she and Mr. Allison ——"

"Are engaged?"

"Don't be curious, Henry—that they often speak of us—and so forth!"

"Do you think they will ever marry, Alice?"

"They certainly will, as Mrs. Goodway used to say of a certain other couple, if they will only get well acquainted with each other!" she merrily answered.

On the New Year's day following, Elwood had the pleasure of writing to his mother and to Alice's father, that the angel of life had visited their parsonage home, and left them a baby boy, "with face and eyes just like his mother's!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

AFFECTION AND AFFLICTION.

It was the midsummer following the birth of little Carl Elwood; and, as his father and mother were enjoying his smiling and cooing one evening just before sunset, the door bell rang, with a peculiarly sharp sound, which they both recognized by looking at each other for a moment, very intently. Elwood went to the door, and found there his friend, Major Collins, with great anxiety on his face, and a marked huskiness in his voice.

He grasped Elwood's hand very tightly, and responded to the invitation to come in by saying, as he entered the house; "I called to see you and your wife for only a minute. Lulu and Lucy are both sick with the bloody flux, and Dr. Vernon says their cases are very serious—they both want to see Mrs. Elwood."

Alice's care of her own baby had not interfered in any manner with the manifestation of her affection for the Collins twins; in fact, her love for them had been greatly intensified by *their* interest in little Carl, which they had repeatedly shown by holding him in their arms, carrying him about the room, and otherwise "entertaining" him; so that his mother's attachment to them was as nearly *maternal* as her conscience would permit it to be.

"O, I am so sorry to hear that," she quickly responded, as she pressed her own child to her bosom, "I must go and see them this evening." She tried to put more cheerfulness into her tone, but found it impossible to do so.

"I know it is too much to ask," said Collins, very gratefully; "but if you could come for only a short time, Mrs. Collins would be very much gratified."

"I will arrange to do so, Mr. Collins," she answered.

On reaching the Collins mansion, she found the little patients lying on different couches in the same room, while Mrs. Collins was so overcome with worry and anxiety, that she was utterly unable to secure the order and quiet so necessary in the care of the sick. The "servants" had been called in again and again to perform some office of attention to the little sufferers, until they were all confusion and excitement; and, although they seemed ready to do whatever might be wanted of them, none of them showed an inclination to act without the direct orders to which they were accustomed.

Mrs. Collins seized her visitor's hands, and wrung them in intensest agony, exclaiming: "O, Mrs. Elwood, Mrs. Elwood, is there anything you can do for them—they seem so very sick!"

Very sick, indeed, they were; but not too sick to recognize the face and form they had learned to love so dearly.

Alice saw at once that they needed fresh air—how this most precious boon is shut out of the homes of both rich and poor—and quiet. She first secured the necessary ventilation of the sick room, and then, by a few kindly words to the "servants," awakened their *interest* in the task of nursing the patients; and, at length, sought to compose Mrs. Collins.

"You do not think they will *die*?" said the latter, most piteously.

"O, I hope not!"

Alice said this with all the assurance she could command; but in spite of her efforts to retain perfect composure, her tears could not be entirely restrained.

Major Collins and Fred presently came in, each one

unconsciously manifesting surprise at the transformation that had been so magically wrought.

"I was very glad to have you come," said Collins, in his most cordial and appreciative tone; and Fred looked at her in unqualified wonder and admiration.

And the sick children, as if anxious to show their gratitude for the offices she had rendered in their behalf, smiled on her very sweetly as she bent over their couches, and soon fell into a light doze; and then she said: "I must go home to my own baby now, as he will be looking for me; but I will come back to see Lulu and Lucy in the morning. I hope they will rest comfortably."

"We will be very glad to have you do so," said Mrs. Collins, almost beseechingly.

As soon as she was gone, the carriage having been ordered for her, Fred remarked: "I told you, father, that Mrs. Elwood would come to-night, if you would ask her."

"Yes, Fred," he responded, very earnestly; "she is always ready to go where she can be of any service; and how glad I am that you have such a good Sunday School teacher—if you always do what she tells you is right, you won't make any mistake."

"Your father's remark is very true, Fred, and I hope you will always remember it," added Mrs. Collins, with her almost wonted precision.

It was after ten o'clock when Alice returned to her home; and she found little Carl just waking up and beginning to cry for her. His simple wants were soon satisfied, and, after enjoying his mother's smiles and caresses for a few minutes, he was soon asleep again.

"What do you think about their case?" Henry asked.

"O, I am so afraid, so afraid, they will die!"—And, with her head resting on his bosom, she let her tears flow freely, until her spirit was greatly relieved.

She went again the next morning, and again the next

evening, continuing her visits from day to day, and watching every phase of the disease that held its victims with so firm a grasp. Elwood, also, visited the afflicted household every day, giving them his most earnest sympathy and prayers.

But all in vain! The ravages of the disease could not be stayed; and, on their fifth birthday, the much loved twins both died, one in the morning, and the other in the evening.

It was Alice's hands that closed their eyes in death, and assisted in preparing their bodies for burial; and, at the funeral, it was noted by all in attendance, that her tears flowed as freely as those of the family.

"We can never repay either of you," said Collins, in his heartiest and most emphatic manner, to both Henry and Alice, as they called at the house in the evening; "but we want you to understand that we will not forget what you have done for us; and if it should ever be in our power to do any service for *you*, we will surely do it!"

Mrs. Collins also expressed herself to the same effect, declaring that "no sister could have done more for me (her) than Mrs. Elwood has done."

Our preacher and his wife have rendered true and faithful service to their rich friends;

Will they always serve the poor and WEAK—*who can not recompense them*—just as faithfully, just as truly?

We shall see!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SHADES AND SHADOWS.

But the Collins family by no means absorbed the entire attention of Elwood and Alice, even during the terrible sickness of the twin children.

In addition to numerous other cases demanding more or less consideration, there was one of special seriousness only two squares from Collins' residence.

Lewis Gilbert had been known as one of the most active business men of Excelsior for the past twenty-five years. He had carried on a great many enterprises of his own, and had been interested in a number of others. Although reverse after reverse was encountered, his buoyant spirit rose above them all ; and he kept on his feet with his reputation untarnished and a fair credit at the banks. Always cheerful, hopeful and confident of success, he put the utmost enthusiasm into every enterprise, and lived in constant anticipation of the day when his bark would float on the highest tide of prosperity.

But that tide never came to him. Instead thereof, for the last two or three years his losses had been growing a little more serious ; and his financial credit had weakened to an extent that was very hard for him to realize. He made no sign of distress, however ; and it was not until the utter collapse of a speculative scheme on which he had built the highest hopes had left him several thousand dollars in debt, that he fully realized his situation.

Had he been a few years younger, he might have

revived from even this blow ; but as it was, the overtaxed brain and nervous system gave way, adding to his financial ruin the most serious nervous prostration and threatened imbecility of mind.

His creditors, Collins being among the principal ones, dealt very leniently with him, and he was permitted to save enough out of the wreck of his property to purchase a small cottage in the east end of the city, into which his family moved.

“Lewis Gilbert befriended and encouraged me when I first started in business,” said Collins to Mrs. Gilbert, “and I don’t want to see him or his family suffer for anything.”

It was very hard for Gilbert to realize that his days of business activity were indeed over. For some time after his removal to their home in the East End, he would spend whole days walking through the busy parts of the city, and taking notice of the various enterprises that came before his eyes. In view of all these, his spirits would rise ; and he would talk to his acquaintances about different projects that he wished to carry out, and which he believed would enable him to pay all the debts that hung over his shoulders, and also give him a competence for his support in his old age. At night he would return to his home, and realizing how utterly he was separated from the business activity and enterprise to which he had been so devoted, he would fall into a state of abject melancholy, and would bewail his fate in the most pitiful terms.

But, while the spirit of Gilbert was so completely broken, Mrs. Gilbert and her daughter Mina, thanks to the sympathetic counsel of their minister and his wife, heroically resolved to make the best of their situation. Collins was willing to offer Mina a situation in his store ; but Mrs. Collins, for reasons which will be clearly seen hereafter, objected to this ; and a place was obtained for

her in a millinery store, that was two or three squares nearer her home—and about the same distance from Collins' store.

And before she had reached the age of eighteen, Mina Gilbert bravely undertook the task of supporting her parents on the meager salary that was allowed for her services.

"Mrs. Elwood," said Collins to Alice one day, in the presence of his wife, "I know how much you are interested in the Gilbert family, and if at any time they need help and you will let me know, I will do anything for them that you request."

And Mrs. Collins, who sincerely desired to stand well in Alice's estimation, and was by no means destitute of sympathy for the Gilbert family, followed up her husband's remark by saying, with some emphasis: "That is right, Joshua, we will give the Gilberts anything they need, especially if Mrs. Elwood requests it."

Fred Collins was two years older than Mina Gilbert, and they had been companions and playmates from earliest childhood, with never a quarrel or a misunderstanding between them. The Gilbert family never claimed the high social rank assumed by Mrs. Collins; but as long as they were able to maintain a tolerably good appearance, and there seemed a reasonable hope of Gilbert's various enterprises coming to a successful issue, she offered no objection to the intimate friendship of the two children. As soon, however, as she began to suspect the real condition of his affairs, which was a year or two before his final collapse, she manifested no small degree of anxiety about the matter.

To do her justice, it should be said that any mother would have been more or less exercised in mind at seeing the friendship of her child and another child ripening into love so early.

She tried for some time to ridicule and discourage Fred, but forebore to issue her final decree until the worst came to the worst in poor Gilbert's affairs. Then at the breakfast table one morning, after an appropriate introduction of the subject, turning her eyes first to Fred and then to his father, she said very calmly :

“Joshua, this must go no further!”

How complete was her victory! No signs of Fred's attachment to Mina shall she *see* for many a day!

Implicit obedience had been Fred's lifelong habit; and, if he did not at once conclude that all was over in respect to his association with Mina, the *spell* that was on him was too strong for him to break out in rebellion, or even to think of meeting Mina or corresponding with her secretly; at any rate, he did not see her for several days.

While he was yet in this *dazed* condition of mind, he started one evening just before sunset with a horse and buggy toward the part of the city in which she lived. He was on a business errand for his father, with no thought of Mina in his mind, but passing her when she was about half-way home, without stopping to think whether he was disobeying his mother or not, he asked her to ride. She gladly accepted; for, besides the pleasure of meeting Fred, it was the first ride she had had, except an occasional one on the street cars, since she began clerking in Mrs. Vincent's millinery store.

“I haven't seen you for several days, Fred,” she said, looking him straight in the eyes as soon as she had taken her seat in the buggy, “where have you been all the time?”

“I am very busy in the store now,” he answered, with color in his face and manifest embarrassment in his tone.

“How do you like it?”—the same simple and unaffected manner she had always used with him, only a little more womanly.

"Pretty well," he answered; and gradually laying aside the constraint that was on him, he proceeded to recount a number of his experiences since he met her last, occasionally alluding to some event of their childhood days.

As they approached her house, he slackened the speed of his horse, while in response to his inquiries about her life in her new home, she told him how well she liked it, except that it was very lonesome sometimes, especially in the evenings. She also told him that her work at the store was very tiresome some days; but she added, looking again directly into his face, "I am so glad I can help my father and mother; you know they were always so good to me, Fred."

What a look of interest and admiration he gave her as she said this, and how highly she prized it!

When he assisted her from the buggy, she thanked him very heartily for the ride; and while, without any express intention of disobeying his mother, he was fixing the location of her house in his mind, she pleasantly said, "Won't you call some time, Fred?"

O, mystery of fate, that these young hearts should find an insurmountable barrier to their innocent wooing and courting!

Fred was not as communicative as usual when he went home that evening; and there were some signs of reserve on his part at the breakfast table the next morning—but no inquiries were made, and no suspicions were aroused.

And Mrs. Gilbert was much pleased to notice after this how Mina enjoyed her work at the millinery store, and how well it seemed to agree with her health and spirits.

But three months later Alice Elwood said to her husband: "Henry, as I was coming from the East End in the street car this evening, I saw Fred Collins walking

home with Mina Gilbert; and from what her mother told me to-day, I believe he frequently spends an hour or two in the evening with her, taking care to be at home before bedtime."

"Why, Alice, they have been lovers ever since they were little children, haven't they?"

"Yes, I know that; but you know what complete power Fred's mother has over him, and she will never consent to his marrying her. I can not help feeling very much concerned about her future happiness!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PRISONS AND PRISONERS.

In the fourth or fifth year of Henry Elwood's pastorate at Excelsior, he wrote to his mother :

EXCELSIOR, ——— — 188—

MY DEAR MOTHER :

You will recollect that during your visit last summer I began to do some religious work among the prisoners in our Penitentiary and in our city and county jails. Since that time I have given considerable attention to various questions connected with prison discipline and prison life. In addition to my inquiries after the spiritual condition of the prisoners, I have made myself acquainted with the history of a large number of them, and have carefully studied their peculiarities of disposition and character. And what varieties I have found!—nearly enough to overthrow all the theories I have ever had as to the causes of crime!

How easy it is to say that all these men *deserve* their fate, and to consider them all unworthy of either sympathy or respect; but when one becomes actually acquainted with them, and sits down in their cells and talks to them, he must see that only a small fraction of them, at most, are utterly hardened; and the difference in character between the average prisoner and the average citizen is not nearly so great as is generally supposed.

Of course, nearly all the prisoners claim that they are suffering punishment unjustly; and in studying these claims, and listening to their various stories—not all of which are false, I am fully persuaded—I am forced to the conclusion that, at least, A FEW of the men confined in the Penitentiary are entirely innocent, and that a certain per cent., which I will not assume to estimate, are only guilty *constructively*—such I believe is the imperfection of human justice.

And it is impossible for the average prisoner to feel that he really deserves the terrible sentence of confinement and disgrace

which he is suffering—that is, he does not believe he is so much worse than everybody outside of prison.

I have been very careful not to allow my sympathy for the prisoners to make me forget the fact that they have transgressed the law, and that they are punished for the protection of Society, and that if they were not so punished, there could be no peace and security and no social order.

I must assume that society, in its administration of criminal law, has correctly measured the *aggregate* of punishment necessary to be inflicted for its protection. If this aggregate could be equally and fairly distributed among all offenders, the portion of each one would be much lighter than it now is. But, as a matter of fact, only a small fraction of transgressors are punished or even prosecuted; and therefore it seems necessary, for society's protection, that they should suffer severely—that they should be, in a certain sense, scapegoats sent into the wilderness, bearing the weight of other men's transgressions as well as their own!

Such is not my ideal of justice by any means; but it is my notion of the imperfection that yet attends our laws.

A great many prisoners have said to me, in effect: "There are many others just as guilty as I am; but I happened to be caught and prosecuted; and the officers said they must make an *example* of me!"

I sometimes even think—although I do not suppose many people would accept such a theory—that some of our prisoners are unwilling examples of the vicarious suffering that prevails throughout the earth!—How else can I dispose of the generally accepted proposition that the extreme degradation to which they are subject is necessary for the safety and protection of society?

At any rate, I can not dispose of the whole subject by concluding, as many do, that the prisoners are all suffering just what they deserve, and that all sympathy for them is only weakness and sentimentality.

On the contrary, I believe that every thing that can be done ought to be done to ameliorate their condition and build up their self-respect. *Punishment, in itself, always tends to degradation; and while I believe it is necessary, I also think it should be administered with constant reference to the reformation of offenders.*

And I do not take this view because I am indifferent to the public welfare and safety; but because I believe society can most effectually protect itself in this way. But, of course, this would involve considerable *evolution*, if not reformation, on the part of the people as a whole. When public opinion becomes truly *Christianized*, we will all rise to a higher idea of justice than the

mere infliction of pain and degradation upon offenders—we will seek to cure the criminal's disease, rather than to make him suffer.

Notwithstanding the great progress we have made in prison reform, there are yet many features of Penitentiary discipline that are for no other purpose than to make the inmates feel their degradation. To convince the average prisoner that he deserves all that he has to endure would be to destroy the last vestige of his self-respect, and deprive him of all hope of reformation or improvement as long as he lives.

It may be a weakness in me thus to feel for these prisoners, as bound and suffering with them; but it is the inevitable result of the acquaintance I have formed with them and of the efforts I have made to do them some good.

I have been very much interested in laws that our Legislature has recently enacted providing for the parole of prisoners whose good conduct justifies it; and I have strongly urged upon the management the adoption of blue and gray uniforms, instead of the degrading stripes that the prisoners are now compelled to wear. I have also expressed myself to the effect that some more liberty of conversation should be allowed the men, as the silence they now undergo must be very oppressive.

My interest in this subject has been greatly heightened by an experience that has taken a very peculiar hold of my thoughts and feelings, and raised more questions in my mind than anything that I ever passed through.

About three months ago, while walking through the shops where the prisoners in the Penitentiary were at work, I noticed a man whose face seemed strangely familiar, and he looked at me as if he knew me. I passed on without paying any farther attention to him, but before I left the prison, I inquired his name of the guards. Judge of my surprise when they showed me the register, and I there saw, in plain, unmistakable letters, "George Marvel."

"Can it be possible this is my old classmate?" I asked myself.

"George Marvel?" I repeated to the official who stood near me. "Why, I used to know such a man!—he was my classmate in College!"

"Guess you are right—he says he graduated in Beulah College in this state about twelve years ago."

"George Marvel!" I again exclaimed; "he is the last man I would expect to see inside the walls of a Penitentiary."

"Ah, some of these finely educated fellows often make excellent subjects for this institution," he replied, rather dryly.

"What's he here for?"

"Embezzlement."

"He must have been unjustly convicted," I said, very earnestly; "he never could have been guilty of that crime."

"They nearly all say they are innocent when they come in," he answered, in his former dry tone; "but Marvel has told me his story in such a manner that I am half inclined to believe that he is innocent; but we have nothing to do with that. Our duty is to take care of the men who are sent here, whether they are guilty or not."

The next day I went back to the prison and had an interview with Marvel in the Chaplain's office. I never realized what a difference the prison garb makes in a man's appearance until he came into my presence—what an effect it must have upon the pride and self-respect of every man who is compelled to wear it!

In reply to my inquiries as to the cause of his incarceration, he gave me his story at some length, which I will relate to you in brief:

He only stayed in New York a year or two, finding it impossible to pay his expenses where there are so many beggars and so many persons in need of all the comforts of life. He then obtained a situation as book-keeper and cashier in a store in Euclid, the county seat of Euclid county, in the northern part of this state. The salary was not large, but he managed to get along without running in debt. About three years ago, one of the clerks, a young man named Jones, who was the son of a widow with several younger children, began to take small sums of money from the drawer and appropriate the same to his own use. He was also employed as outside collector for the firm, and would frequently collect small bills from customers without turning over the money to the cashier. These peculations continued until they amounted to several hundred dollars; and when Marvel discovered the young man's offense and took him to task for it, he begged most piteously to have it kept from the knowledge of the firm, promising to take no more money and make good what he had taken out of his wages as rapidly as possible. Moved by his entreaties and those of his mother, Marvel consented to this; and Jones was permitted to keep his position without being exposed to the firm.

But his spendthrift habits had got such a hold upon him that his peculations were soon renewed, and it was not many months before they amounted to more than twice the former amount; and it was no longer possible to keep the firm in ignorance.

It was a period of financial stringency, and the loss greatly aggravated the embarrassment under which the firm was laboring. Whether they believed that Marvel had appropriated some of the

money to his own use, or was only guilty of concealing Jones' offense from them, they were greatly incensed against him, and had him arrested as *particeps criminis* with Jones, and set themselves to work to secure his conviction. Jones, too, was arrested and lodged in jail, and the Prosecuting Attorney began to search for testimony upon which to bring the cases into court. Indictments were found by the Grand Jury against both Marvel and Jones; but although the Prosecutor believed Marvel guilty, he did not think a case could be made out unless Jones could be induced to testify against him. He accordingly had a number of interviews with Jones in the jail, in the course of which he held out the hope of immunity from punishment and release from jail, in case he could give sufficient testimony against Marvel to secure his conviction. This proposition was too much for Jones' very small sense of honor, and, without waiting for his own attorney's advice, he promptly accepted it.

Marvel and his counsel were so confident of an acquittal, notwithstanding the great mistake he had made in concealing Jones' offense from the firm, that they made comparatively little preparation for defense; and they were completely surprised on the day of the trial, when Jones was put on the stand and testified not only that Marvel used a portion of the money, but gave a skillfully devised narrative of the dates and other circumstances under which the money was appropriated by them both! A number of "corroborative circumstances," such as Marvel's frequent visits to Jones' house, the number of times they were seen together on the street, and the close conversations which the other employes had often noticed them holding together in the store, were skillfully introduced in evidence by the State, and the Prosecutor, with an air of triumph, announced that he would rest his case.

Marvel took the stand, and frankly stated that he had concealed Jones' offense from the firm on account of sympathy for his mother; but Jones' testimony had been given to the jury in so plausible and apparently so candid a manner, and the cross-examination had so completely failed to weaken its force, that Marvel's admissions were considered additional "corroboration," if not a virtual confession of guilt.

He was promptly convicted, and although his counsel made most earnest efforts to secure a new trial, sentence followed, and he was brought to the Penitentiary, and clothed in a felon's garb.

His conviction was a great surprise to nearly all his immediate acquaintances, and they secured a number of signatures to a petition for his pardon and presented the same to the Governor,

with the numerous points and arguments tending to prove his innocence of the crime. The Governor believed that the testimony was not sufficient for a conviction, but stated, after a long and serious consideration of the case, that he could not consistently reverse the verdict of the jury, *without being fully satisfied of Marvel's innocence*; so the efforts to secure his pardon failed.

Marvel shows a cheerfulness that utterly surprises me. He has been given a place in the Chaplain's office, and the Chaplain says that he labors incessantly in behalf of the other prisoners, writing their letters, selecting their books for them, teaching the ignorant ones to read and write, and showing a disposition to help them in every way possible.

Strange to say, he bears no malice against Jones, and has even said to me that he was glad Jones did not have to go to the Penitentiary, as it would have broken his mother's heart. I can not consider it a virtue in him, however, to have no indignation at such baseness as was manifested by Jones. I am still hoping that some way can be found to secure his pardon, but, at present, there seems to be no prospect of it.

Alice and little Carl both send their love to you.

From Your Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SIN AND SORROW.

“Henry, I hope I am needlessly concerned about Mina Gilbert; but I can not help noticing that for some time past she has been more and more interested in Fred Collins. I think, however, that Fred has managed to keep his visits to her a secret from his mother.”

It was two years after Mina began clerking in Mrs. Vincent's millinery store that Alice Elwood made this remark to her husband.

“Perhaps they have made an engagement in spite of Mrs. Collins' opposition,” he replied. “Young men like Fred don't always consult their mothers about such matters.”

“Yes, Henry, that is just what I am afraid of, that Fred has promised to marry her.”

“Wouldn't it be a very desirable thing for her? Fred is a fellow of good habits, and attends to his business very faithfully; and they are both members of the church.”

“It would be, Henry, were it not for Fred's mother; and I have heard her speak of Mina in such a way as to show her feelings unmistakably—Fred would never dare to marry against her wishes.”

“I should hate very much to see him promise to marry her and then disappoint her, Alice.”

A month later the subject was renewed by Alice: “Henry, have you noticed that Mina Gilbert hasn't been at church or Sunday School the past two or three Sundays?

And I thought I saw such an anxious look on her face when I was in Mrs. Vincent's store yesterday; and when one of the girls made some allusion to Fred Collins, and jokingly asked her if she expected him to overtake her on the way home, she gave a nervous start that almost frightened me. She also seemed to have something on her mind that she would like to talk to me about; but as there was no opportunity for this, she only made some remark about the millinery that I purchased. I feel very anxious about her!"

"You certainly can have no grounds for fear in reference to Mina, Alice; she is a very pious girl; and how faithful and devoted she has been to her parents."

"Well, I must dismiss my fears, lest I do her great injustice."

Alice made a sincere effort to free her mind of all apprehensions of evil concerning Mina, and partially succeeded in doing so for the remainder of the day; but at night her sleep was disturbed by a dream, in which she saw the object of her concern wandering by the wayside, under a dark cloud, which threatened to burst upon her in devastation and ruin.

The next evening, just after the hour when all the stores and shops of the city were closed, Elwood not having yet returned from a funeral service which he had attended in the afternoon, Alice heard her door-bell ring with a sound that held her ears at a painful tension, until the last vibration had ceased.

With a flutter of heart she could not suppress, she went to the door and opened it—Mina Gilbert was there!

Her story was soon told. Fred Collins had promised again and again to marry her, but had failed to do so; and now—

God pity every maiden who has trusted too fondly and loved too well!

“Everybody will despise and scorn me!” she cried; “and what will become of my poor father and mother, unless Fred will do as he promised?”

“What does Fred say?” asked Alice, very kindly.

“The last time I saw him, which was more than a week ago, he told me his father and mother, his mother especially, were opposed to his marrying at present, and I would have to wait a short time till he could talk to them and gain their consent—but I have’nt seen or heard anything from him since, although I have sent him two or three letters urging him to come and see me.”

“That is what he ought to do, Mina, and I sincerely hope he will,” responded Alice, with all the assurance she could assume; but despite her efforts, her voice faltered very perceptibly as she uttered the last sentence.

“I believe he would do as he has promised,” continued Mina, “if it were not for his mother.”

“Mina,” said Alice, in a truly sympathetic tone, “I can not say much to you to-day; but I will consult Mr. Elwood, and we will see whether anything can be done to have Fred fulfill his promise to you. I sincerely hope you will not be forsaken, even in this great trouble.”

“Do you think the Lord will care for one who has sinned as I have, Mrs. Elwood? Will he forgive me, if I pray to him?”

“His mercy never fails those who are entirely penitent,” was Alice’s calm reply; but her spirit was too sore and heavy to say more than this; and, in a few minutes, Mina took her leave, believing that at least one friend was left her in the wide, wide world!

When Elwood returned and Alice had communicated Mina’s revelation to him, they consulted to a late hour concerning their duty in the premises. They agreed in the opinion, that whatever Fred might be willing to do, and whatever his father might think he ought to do, his mother

would be bitterly opposed to his marrying Mina, and that, in all probability, her will would prevail. While Elwood realized the delicacy of his situation as pastor, he resolved to shrink from no duty that was made clear to him, and he retired with the determination in his mind to see both Major Collins and Fred in the morning, and tell them both that he believed the promise to Mina ought to be fulfilled. "And since Fred is in your Sunday School class," he said to Alice, "perhaps you could have some influence with him."

"Henry," she replied, "I believe Fred would be very willing to marry her—but O, his mother!"

"You may have a duty to perform in reference to her, Alice."

"I do not know how that may be, Henry, but after the appeal that Mina has made to me, I will not forsake her—I will give her my sympathy and friendship in her trouble, whether Fred marries her or not."

Concerning Mrs. Collins, they could come to no conclusion but to await the result of Elwood's interview with Fred and his father.

But Mrs. Collins' eyes had been opened. A full week previous to this, she had incidentally heard from some one living in the East End that Fred occasionally paid evening visits to Mina, and had been seen a number of times walking home with her. The very day after she obtained this information, she ordered her coachman to drive her to the millinery store in which Mina was clerking, where she sought a private interview with Mrs. Vincent, the proprietress.

In response to her inquiries about Fred and Mina, Mrs. Vincent promptly said: "All I know is that some evenings he meets her on the street just after she leaves the store, and they start towards her home together. I

hope his intentions are all right, but I have my doubts, and Mina has acted very strangely lately."

It would have required a very severe probing of Mrs. Collins' consciousness to determine whether she would have preferred honorable intentions on Fred's part to dishonorable ones; but it can be truly said that she was utterly opposed to his associating with Mina with any intentions whatever.

Mrs. Vincent expected to be interrogated still farther, and could probably have responded with a list of dates and other circumstances (and surmises); but Mrs. Collins had learned all she wished to know, and speedily took her departure, resolving that action should be taken at once.

She could not for a moment think it possible that Fred had compromised the family dignity by any intimacy with Mina which would give her a hold upon him in law; but Mrs. Vincent's insinuation, although she felt very much like resenting it at first, had opened her eyes very clearly to the gravity of the situation, and greatly stimulated her desire and determination to put a stop to Fred's visits at once.

"Joshua," she said to her husband, just before they retired at night, after communicating to him the information she had obtained from Mrs. Vincent, "how is it that all this has been going on so near your store, and you have never found it out?"

"Believe me, Elizabeth," he protested, "I hadn't the least idea of it, and business matters have absorbed my attention."

"Joshua, these visits of Fred's must stop, if he has to go to Philadelphia and stay for some time!"

"That is surely not necessary, Elizabeth," he ventured to protest; "Fred surely will not—"

"I supposed myself," she interrupted, "that he would not desire to associate with a girl so far below him, but it

seems that I have been mistaken, and he must not stay in Excelsior—he must go to Philadelphia until he gets over this foolish attachment.”

“But Elizabeth, Fred is very useful in the store, and—”

“You can easily hire some one else to take his place in the store, and as you have often said that Fred ought to take a thorough course at a Commercial College, he can board at his uncle’s and do this—and he should go without delay.”

All this was spoken in so decided a tone that Collins felt no inclination to argue the matter. Besides, with the single exception of going to Philadelphia, it was the very course that he himself had suggested to Fred a number of times, and he knew that Fred himself had the matter under consideration.

So, with mingled craft and force of will, Mrs. Collins succeeded in getting her husband’s co-operation in sending Fred to Philadelphia; and now only Fred remained to be managed.

She had, on two or three recent occasions, met some signs of resistance on the young man’s part, when she attempted to direct his course in too precise and authoritative a manner; and this had caused her to adopt a more gentle and persuasive tone with him—which she had found it more effective, too.

So, instead of upbraiding him for his disregard of her decree in reference to Mina Gilbert, and renewing her injunction in more emphatic terms, she commenced talking to him, after he came in the next evening, having had no opportunity during the day, about the importance of his securing a more thorough commercial education, now that he was nearly twenty-one years old, and there was no reason why he should not become as successful a merchant as his father. After this appeal to his pride, she told him

how pleasant a time he could have at his uncle's in Philadelphia, and what opportunities there would be for a good business training in that city.

"But, mother, the Commercial College in Excelsior is just as good as any in Philadelphia."

"There are some advantages in Philadelphia that you will not have here, Fred," she said, very emphatically, and then added: "There are other reasons why you should go to Philadelphia, that I must mention to you. You have lately been so imprudent as to walk home with Mina Gilbert a number of times"—Fred lifted his eyes to her in blank astonishment, which she assumed not to notice—"I am not going to censure you for this, as young men of your age are often apt to act imprudently, and associate with girls who are beneath them socially; but there is already considerable talk about it, and I fear there will be more, if you stay in Excelsior. You certainly do not want your name associated in this way with Mina's, when you could never think of such a thing as marrying her!"

Fred had just come from an hour's interview with Mina, in which she had besought him, in the most piteous terms, to redeem his promise, and save her from the disgrace that threatened her, and, as before stated, he had promised to talk to his father and mother and try to secure their consent to an early marriage, so that the effect of his mother's utterance upon his mind and feelings may be easily imagined. His promise to Mina had still enough effect upon him to prevent a direct acceptance of his mother's proposition; but her words and manner most effectually prevented his saying anything to her about marrying Mina.

And when he found that his father favored his mother's plan, and that he must either act according to their wishes, or make a clean breast of his wrong-doing, and accept all the ridicule and shame that such a confession

would involve, he proceeded to make his arrangements for an early departure to Philadelphia, leaving Mina to await the answer to her appeal—in vain!

Let it not be concluded, however, that the young man had no sincere love and respect for the girl he had wronged, and no qualms of conscience for the violation of his plighted word; nay, more than this, he was strongly inclined, when alone with his father for a few minutes before his departure, to make a complete confession of the wrong he had done, and to declare his wish to atone for it by marrying Mina Gilbert.

Perhaps if he had felt certain that he was safe from his mother's ear, his better nature would have asserted itself, to this extent, at least; but, as it was, all impulses in this direction were borne down by the superior will to which he had all his life been subject.

Are not the psychological forces to which we are subject as irresistible as are the physical forces?

And at the very hour when Henry and Alice Elwood were so seriously consulting and praying over their duty in reference to Mina Gilbert, Fred Collins boarded the train for Philadelphia, leaving her to bear the reproach of their mutual sin as best she could.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SERVICE AND SACRIFICE.

It was not without considerable misgiving, that Henry started on his errand of duty the next morning. Collins was seated in his private office, and, in a very few minutes, he was made acquainted with the story of Mina Gilbert's sorrow.

"Why, Mr. Elwood," he responded, with manifest embarrassment, "I wish I had known this a day sooner. Fred went to Philadelphia last night, and expects to be gone several months;" and, fearing that Elwood doubted his sincerity, he proceeded to make a full statement concerning Fred's departure and the causes leading to it, solemnly protesting that neither he nor Mrs. Collins knew that anything so serious had occurred.

Elwood was fully satisfied of Collins' sincerity; but he could not avoid an expression of his deep regret that Fred had left home, as both he and Mrs. Elwood had hoped for the fulfillment of the promise made to Mina Gilbert.

He did not notice the deep blush that came over Collins' face, as he heard Mrs. Elwood's name, and was made fully conscious of her interest in the case.

The two men sat together in perfect silence for some minutes, and then Collins said; "I can not express to you, Mr. Elwood, how much this affair mortifies and distresses me. Fred has gone to Philadelphia, but Mina Gilbert and her parents shall be provided for—I will assure you of that." And, after a few moments' thought: "But money

can not atone for a wrong like this; Fred—" he was going to say, "Fred ought to come home and marry her," but he thought of the power that swayed his household, and checked his utterance.

Not feeling certain that it would be profitable to urge the matter any farther at present—rather, not seeing just what he could say to Collins that would be effective—Elwood returned to his home, and reported the result of his interview to Alice.

"I fear we will have to give up all hope, Henry," she said; in a more discouraging tone than he had ever heard her use; "If Mr. Collins had his way, I believe he would write to Fred to come home and marry Mina; but Mrs. Collins will never permit him to do it; and even if Fred were here, I do not believe he would marry her in the face of his mother's opposition."

When Collins reported Elwood's revelation to his wife in the evening, she calmly said: "How glad we ought to be, Joshua, that Fred has gone to Philadelphia! What a mortification it would be to him and to us, if he were at home! But, after all," she slowly continued—how *natural* it was for her to feel thus—"Mina's story may not be true; she may be only trying to force Fred to marry her!"

"Elizabeth, if Fred has really promised—"

"Joshua, how surprised I am," she interrupted, with a severity of tone even greater than that to which he was accustomed, "that you should think of such a thing as Fred's marrying a milliner, especially under such circumstances as these. Would you bring such a disgrace upon your family?"

Joshua was silenced!

Feeling that his whole duty toward Mina Gilbert and her parents would not be performed without expressing his notion of Fred's obligations in the hearing of both Mr. and Mrs. Collins, Elwood repaired to their residence

the next evening, expecting to find them both at home, and resolving to deliver his message, whatever effect it might have upon them.

"I will hope for your success," said Alice, trying to encourage him, as she followed him to the door; but before she realized what she was saying, she added, "I fear it will be hoping against hope!"

To Elwood's great disappointment, he found only Mrs. Collins at home, her husband having gone down street to fulfill some business engagement, which would probably occupy his attention the entire evening—but the word he had come to speak must be spoken!

Whether Mrs. Collins suspected his errand or not, she received him with the same special cordiality that she always manifested toward both himself and Alice; and, after introducing the subject as skillfully as he could, he alluded to Mina's condition, and declared that he could not discharge his duty as their pastor, unless he expressed his solemn opinion that Fred ought to marry her, and repair the wrong he had done her.

Mrs. Collins suppressed whatever resentment arose in her breast; but immediately answered, with an emphasis that nearly staggered him; "Mr. Elwood, we are very sorry for Mina Gilbert's misfortune, and Collins will see that she and all her family are properly provided for—whether Fred is guilty as she charges him or not;—but a marriage is not to be thought of for a moment."

After hearing her through, he no longer wondered that Collins could not express himself more freely in reference to Fred's obligations.

And let him not assume to "judge" Mrs. Collins—her own son, not somebody's else's, is involved!

How many mothers, in such cases, desire only that JUSTICE shall be done?

When Mina Gilbert learned that Fred Collins had left

the city, her grief and distress knew no limit. Instead of the girl whom every one honored for supporting her father and mother, she saw herself an object of scorn and reproach—despised and shunned by all who knew her—and compelled to endure all the pains and perils of her condition without either sympathy or respect!

But is any prison-house of the human soul so dark, that *no* ray of light can enter it? Is any stormy sea of our earthly life so bounded with rocks, that it furnishes no harbor or haven whatsoever? Is any wronged girl so desolate and forsaken, that she can find no bosom on which to lean her head?

In the depth of her distress, Mina Gilbert called to mind, that when she revealed her secret to Alice Elwood, she was not spurned from the door as one unworthy of all womanly sympathy and counsel. “But,” she said to herself, with a thrill of pain, “I then had some hope that Fred would marry me—but what will she say now?”

With trembling steps she presented herself at the parsonage door, and was received as kindly as before.

“May I come in?” she pitifully asked; and when she took the seat that was offered her, she could only look around, for a time, in speechless misery.

“O, Mrs. Elwood,” she at length said, “what will become of me now? I will have no friends, and my poor father and mother—”

“Mina, your trouble is a very great one, but if you will bear it bravely, the Lord will sustain you and raise up *some* friends for you. Mr. Collins says that neither you nor your parents shall suffer for anything. All I can say now is, endure as patiently as you can, and trust in the wisdom and goodness of our Heavenly Father.”

“Do you really think he will hear my prayers, Mrs. Elwood?”

“He has promised to hear *all* his creatures when they

cry to him; and I believe that Christ died for erring women as well as erring men. I will pray for you every day, Mina."

"O, Mrs. Elwood, this is more than I deserve," was the grateful reply. "Will you, indeed, be my friend, and my father's and mother's?"

"Yes, Mina, you can count on my friendship to the last, whatever others may say."

And Mina went away in full confidence that *this* promise would be made good.

There was no small degree of surprise at the number of visits Alice made to the Gilbert cottage and the time she took pains to spend with Mina and her mother during the weeks and months that followed; but no one dared to question the purity and disinterestedness of her motives; and there was gradually awakened in the minds of all who knew her a decided admiration for her faithfulness and devotion.

"I must perform this office for Mina," she said to her husband, "even if I stand alone—yes, even if I have to suffer reproach on her account."

And when Mina's hour of trial came, and she must go down to the gates of death that a new life might be ushered into the world, her dear friend was by her side, helping her to bear her anguish, and striving to cheer and smile away her shame!

In thus placing *herself* between the wronged girl and the reproaches of society, our Alice, indeed, stood alone; but in the visions of the night, she saw the face of the CHRIST shining upon her, as he touched her brow, and said, "*Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these, you did it unto ME!*"

CHAPTER XL.

WORK AND WAGES.

EXCELSIOR, January 1, 188-.

MY DEAR MOTHER :

Our little Carl is three years old to-day, and how bright and interesting he has become to us. Since your visit last summer, your name is frequently upon his lips, and he often expresses a desire to see you again.

Clara Martin, with whom you became so well acquainted while here, is very active in all religious and reformatory work that is open to her. Although she has only lived in the city a little over a year, she is already recognized as one of the most active and most devoted laborers in the Master's vineyard, and I have reason to believe that she will be the means of doing very great good.

In connection with a few other very devout women, she has recently started a Home for Fallen Women, and they have had the satisfaction of rescuing a number of girls from a life of sin and helping them to start on a course of reformation and restoration to pure and true womanhood. Alice has been very much interested in their work, and has given it as much time and attention as her many other duties would permit. They all say that the great difficulty in doing anything for these women, even after the desire for reformation is awakened in them, is to restore their self-respect, and relieve them of the *conscious degradation* that they suffer.

In studying this subject, I have been deeply pained at the perils and temptations to which the poor working girls of the city are subjected, and at the devices that are employed to lure them to destruction. And then how the poor wretches avenge their own ruin and degradation by dragging down the men, both old and young, who become their dupes and victims.

The shops and stores of our city are crowded with young girls who are willing to work ten or twelve hours a day for very low wages, while "house servants" are in constant demand where the work is lighter and the pay decidedly better. I used to think the

girls were very much to blame for this; but since Alice and I have talked to a number about it, it is impossible not to sympathize with them very largely. They say that every girl who goes into domestic service is at once put under the most rigid social ban, and is constantly made to feel that she is a menial, and nothing else.

Some of the girls have also said to Alice that their chances for marrying well would be almost entirely cut off, as respectable young men would not visit them in other people's kitchens. Not one have we found who would accept the idea that a place in a Christian home is better than a cigar shop or a factory.

"There is no Christian *home* in Excelsior for a working woman!" is their very general exclamation.

The mothers of dependent girls nearly all feel the same way—and I think it is very *natural* that they should.

Another thing that pains me is that I can find no way to preach to this class or offer them the full privileges of the church. I do not mean that they would be refused admission to the membership of the church, if they should apply; but I can not invite and encourage them to attend the church services as I would wish to do, because I know there is a feeling on their part, that they are not wanted in our pews.

They seem to be separated—"differentiated"—from all other classes, so far, at least, as social privileges and the services in our Protestant churches are concerned. God knows I would be very glad to preach the Gospel to every creature, not even excluding "servants" and "sinners," but when I see the line of coaches in front of my church every Sunday morning after the services, and reflect that perhaps in every rich and well-to-do family, the cook has been compelled to spend the forenoon in preparing the dinner, I wonder to what extent I can claim to be fulfilling our Lord's command!

And yet these girls are expected to bear their social stigma, and at the same time prove themselves very faithful, very industrious and very much interested in their duties!

I can not see why this most important of all occupations should be accounted so degrading by "society."

I know there are many difficulties connected with the question, but most of these could be easily disposed of, if there were a *disposition* among even Christian women to recognize the womanhood and the social nature of those who serve them. If the obligations of the Golden Rule were acknowledged by the "mistresses" of large houses, we could at least *offer* the privileges of the gospel to all women as well as to all men!

This whole question of the relation of the rich to the poor is

one that must seriously perplex the soul of every minister of Christ, especially in a large city where the inequality in respect to property is so glaring. While I have not pretended to solve the problem, I have preached, and have endeavored to present it as something more than a "glittering generality," that the property of the rich *is not their own*, but that they should hold all their possessions as *stewards* for the highest good of society; and I think I may say without boasting that my preaching, of this principle has not been in vain, so far as many of my hearers are concerned.

Since you were here last summer we have had a very pleasant visit from my friend Allison and his bride, *nee* Miss Blanche Jordan. Although they are not as youthful as most newly married couples, their devotion to each other is of the most beautiful order, and I believe it will be as enduring as their lives.

My friend Vernon is much better satisfied with life since he began to take some part in our religious meetings; but he can not get over a feeling of regret that he gave up the ministry, although at the same time he protests that it was necessary. I have tried to persuade him that he might yet become a minister, but he always replies that it is too late, and that his practice of another profession has unfitted him for the ministerial office, even if he could become strictly orthodox again—which, he says, is impossible.

He and Clara Martin meet at our house occasionally, but although they have the very highest regard for each other, there seems to be no prospect of their renewing their former engagement. Alice feels very hopeful, however, that they will one day do so—she often expresses the wish that she may live to see their hearts united once more.

I am happy to inform you that our efforts to secure a pardon for my classmate Marvel have at last proved successful. I say *our* efforts, because several others besides myself (including a number of the leading citizens of Excelsior) were interested in the matter. I even secured some assistance from Mark Conklin, which his acute sense and the knowledge he has gained of the law enabled him to give.

"Don't call on me for any more such work, Elwood," he said to me as soon as the pardon was signed by the Governor; "for my stock of Christian charity—if I ever had any—is utterly exhausted, and is never likely to be replenished, at least not in this world!"

Marvel's services among the prisoners were deemed so valuable by the officials of the Penitentiary, that they have given him a position in the institution as an instructor of the inmates; and although he himself is free, his labors in their behalf continue as unremitting as before.

I received a letter from Harry Howard, my former Mission School *protege*, a few days since. He is in ——— College, and is studying for the ministry, which he hopes to enter in a very few years. This alone is a sufficient reward for all my mission labors while in the Seminary, as I can confidently predict a very successful career for him wherever his lot may be cast.

Concerning theological questions I am still seeking light, and thanking God for the light he has given me. I have heretofore written to you concerning my difficulty with the doctrines of future punishment and total depravity, and the partial conclusions I had come to in reference to them. I can add nothing, except that I see still more clearly how much truth they contain, and how impossible it is to understand them fully.

The problem of the Trinity has given me very great perplexity; but when I learned to regard it as the expression of a great spiritual fact, and not as a mere mathematical problem, my difficulty became very much less, so that now, although I still realize how great a mystery that doctrine involves, it has become, to some extent, a comfort and inspiration to me, instead of a puzzle (if I may so designate it) and a source of perplexity.

Still more difficult to settle has been the question of the Atonement. Believe me, mother, when I tell you that I have walked the floor many hours at night in considering the question what view or theory of this doctrine I ought to adopt, and what was the truly honorable course for me as a Presbyterian minister to take. The mystery of this doctrine, as well as that of the other doctrines of the Confession, increases the more we study it, just as the horizon widens when we ascend a hill or mountain; but I believe that I have not studied this subject in vain. I have no definite and final "theory of the Atonement;" but I believe—yes, I know—that Jesus Christ, in both his life and his death, fulfilled, and taught us to fulfill, the great and universal law of sacrifice. Woe is me, if I preach not this law!

Since giving up the belief in verbal inspiration and in the absolute "inerrancy" of the Bible, I have been led to study it with increased avidity and enthusiasm, and my appreciation of the virtue and excellence of the book has been greatly enhanced. I know it is a divine book, because it is so human. I can not describe the manner of its inspiration, but I know it is inspired, even as I know that the sun shines on the earth!

In the very partial solution of these questions that I have attained, how much I have been indebted to Alice. With almost infinite patience she has listened to all my difficulties and given me the benefit of her marvelous insight and clear understanding,

always making me feel that I was safe in following her counsel. Never once have I sought her help in vain—never once has she failed to give me the very counsel that I needed. I may fitly describe her as an angel of light, always illumining my path, and pointing me to the heights of the mountain, where the true and the beautiful and the good are to be found!

When I expressed the fear that I was indulging in too much freedom and range of thought, she answered, "The people want your thought, Henry; and don't you see how highly they appreciate it every Sunday?"

When I told her that my conscience was sorely exercised with the question whether I ought to remain in the ministry of the Presbyterian church with such doubts as were in my mind, she softly and sweetly sang:

"When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flames shall not hurt thee, I only design,
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to REFINÉ!"

Whenever I have felt weary or discouraged—and she never fails to notice feelings of this kind, whether I express them or not—her voice of cheer and comfort has come to my ear as unfailing as the rising of the sun, bidding me execute my divine commission and preach the gospel of the kingdom, according to the highest measure of the gift that is in me! "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not, my dear Henry," she has said to me again and again.

If my ministry in the Presbyterian church has resulted, or ever shall result, in any good, how much of it will I owe to my wife—and my mother!

My work, as you know, is very great; but I remember the words of Christ, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal!"

Alice often says I ought not to seek any higher reward or wages for my service than the service itself—is she not right?

From Your Affectionate Son,

HENRY ELWOOD.

"What 'service' do you refer to?" asked Mark Conklin, after Elwood had read him the foregoing letter just before sealing it. "Would not the city be just as prosperous, and the people just as happy, if you had never come here?"

"I must concede," was the reply, "that I have done very little, comparatively speaking; but, as I say in my letter, I don't believe I have labored altogether in vain. Some good, at least, has been accomplished, and I hope to see much greater results in the future."

"Your promised 'Millenium' is a long way off, at any rate?"

"But we are making constant progress toward it."

"And suppose it should come in your day—suppose you should 'abolish poverty' or even get all your rich men to acknowledge themselves 'stewards' (whatever you may mean by that term)—suppose the people should all become intelligent and even religious—would they be any happier than they now are?"

"It surely requires no argument to show that if any one could bring about the results you speak of, he would be doing mankind the greatest possible service."

"Sure of that, are you? Why is it then, that all the progress we do make, whether in wealth, or in knowledge, or even in religion, only increases our desires—and our disappointments."

"'Only increases' them; do you really mean that, Conklin?"

"I will strike that word *only* from the pleadings—you see I have picked up some legal phrases, if not legal knowledge—if you wish, but what are the facts? Are not ignorant people as happy as educated people? Are not the poor people in Excelsior, for whom you are so much concerned, as happy as the rich—are not laborers as happy as their employers, and even 'servants' as happy as their 'mistresses?' Are not people who give no attention to religion as happy as those who do? Why, then, should you rack your brain from week to week about the 'condition' of these people, when you can not change the order of things, and would do them no real 'service' if you could."

"I believe myself," was Elwood's reply, "that Providence has wisely ordered that *no* class or classes of people shall monopolize the happiness which is the portion of the race, or even obtain an undue portion of it; but, plausible as your statements are, they are made from the standpoint of the night, rather than of the day. For myself, I prefer to be a child of the day, and to find in life itself a reward for all the services and activities of life!"

CHAPTER XLI.

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS.

“Mr. Elwood,” said Prof. Humboldt, as the two men were taking a walk in the fields and groves outside the city one summer afternoon, “why is it that whenever a system of religion is devised, it must be made up of so many absurd theories, or ‘doctrines,’ as they are called? Even if we assume that man has a religious nature which must needs manifest itself in acts of worship, why can not men be taught to recognize and adore the Supreme Power without burdening their minds with a load of superstition that defies all reason and sense?”

“Admitting for the sake of argument,” was Elwood’s reply, “that there is more or less ‘superstition’ connected with the accepted doctrines of Christianity, let me ask whether you do not find something similar to it connected with all other subjects of human knowledge and consideration.”

“There is no superstition about science, at any rate, my friend Elwood; she stands upon fact and fact alone; she requires positive demonstration before she will accept any conclusion whatever.”

“You teach Geography by means of globes and maps, do you not?”

“Yes, but there is nothing akin to superstition in that; the globe only *represents* the earth; the map represents Europe, Asia or America, as the case may be.”

“You do, at least, call your symbol by the name of the thing it represents?”

"Very well; but I see no traces of superstition in all this," said the Professor, rather thoughtfully.

"You teach Geonietry and Trigonometry by means of figures on slate or blackboard?"

"Suppose we do?"

"You call your figure bounded by three straight lines a triangle, and you give the name of circle, square and so on to other figures. Is there any such thing—I mean any such objective fact—as a triangle or circle or square or any other Geometrical figure that you could name? And yet you will draw your figure on the board, and not only call it a triangle, but analyze and discuss it as if it possessed all the properties of a triangle."

"But the superstition?" responded the Professor, a little worried.

"I do not wish to dispute about words or terms," Elwood replied; "you will, at least, admit that mathematics, exact a science as it is claimed to be, can only be taught or studied by the use of symbols—our mental concepts must have some visible and tangible representation? And, of course, you will admit that no symbol fully represents the thing for which it stands?"

"The very idea of a symbol implies that."

"And the more we become acquainted with any object or principle or concept, the more inadequate will any symbol of it appear to us. A common globe put before a child's eye might be of great value in acquainting him with the shape and other qualities of the earth—but it would be of scarcely any use whatever to men of our age."

"Are you claiming that your theological doctrines are only globes or maps or figures drawn on slate or blackboard? I have always supposed they were solemn and eternal verities *per se*—they are presented to us as such."

"Without stopping to answer this thrust of the Professor, Elwood continued: "As I have said, you call the

figure on the board a veritable triangle, and, at least for the time being, regard it as such, but its importance consists in the fact that it *represents* a triangle—why, then, will you not take our statements of doctrine as *symbols* of truth, however inadequate and imperfect they may be?”

“Your analogy is certainly far-fetched, if it be an analogy at all,” replied the Professor.

“Well, I will try to find one that is clearer,” continued Elwood. “Let me state a few simple facts in Nature. Our eyes cannot abide the direct rays of the sun, but must be protected by our eyelids; our stomachs cannot receive pure nutrition, but all our food must be taken in bulk and go through the process of digestion, the chyle being assimilated and the excrement thrown off; our knowledge of all material things, as Herbert Spencer has so clearly shown, is, at best, only ‘relative;’ and is it not a fact that most of our advances in physical science have been made by means of investigations and experiments conducted upon false, or partly false, hypotheses?”

“I must admit,” said the Professor, “that this oak tree, under which we are sitting, is a protection from the heat of the sun as well as my eyelids are a protection from its direct rays; but whatever force and pertinency there may be in these analogies, I don’t see how you help your doctrines, at least from the orthodox standpoint. Christianity is supposed to be a direct revelation from heaven; but you make it nothing more than a branch of science, or a sort of common law subject to constant change and evolution. Are you not making a fundamental departure from orthodoxy in seeking to defend it in this manner? Would not your Presbytery make you a subject of discipline, if you were to speak thus in your pulpit?”

“Presbytery has, at least, taken no action abridging my freedom of thought, and it certainly could not, if it would, close my eyes to the plain facts in the case; but

what I would like to ask you is, whether it is either logical or 'scientific' to put the brand of 'superstition' upon the symbols of Christianity, as long as the symbols of mathematics are so imperfect, and as long as science can give us no *absolute* knowledge of anything?"

"Are you claiming, then, that Christianity is a subject of evolution, instead of a direct and absolute revelation from heaven?" asked the Professor, with some assurance.

"Rather do I claim that it is a revelation from heaven *and* a subject of evolution. If evolution is the universal law or principle of the universe, why should not Christianity be brought within its scope and operation? Why should it not adapt itself to the advances of science and the development of the human intellect? Why should it not have leave to GROW, as well as the trees and the grass that are before our eyes?"

"But you claim it is *divine*?"

"And I would ask no higher proof of its being a divine revelation than its capacity of evolution. Nature herself is a perfect revelation; but how slowly and gradually we come to a knowledge of her various laws and forces! Is it not so with spiritual things? The creeds themselves have been evolved from experience; they are, at best, but symbols of the reality, but the setting of the diamond, but finite expressions, or outlines, of the infinite truth. If you will substitute the word *imperfection* for the word 'superstition,' I will find no fault with your nomenclature, at any rate."

"You have undertaken no common task, Elwood, in thus assuming to reconcile religion with science and philosophy."

"The task ought not to be so very difficult," was the quiet reply; "there is nothing so scientific and so philosophical as Religion; and both Science and Philosophy should ever be imbued with the religious spirit."

CHAPTER XLII.

DOGMAS AND DOCTRINES.

“But,” continued the Professor, “many of your doctrines, as stated in the Confession, are not even fit symbols of truth. Take ‘eternal punishment,’ for instance. Is it not an essentially barbarous and inhuman idea that finite creatures are to suffer ‘eternal torments’ for their acts, and for no other purpose than to gratify the vengeance of their Creator?”

“Still it embodies and expresses—crudely and imperfectly, if you please—the sense of justice in the human breast, and the everlasting distinction between right doing and wrong doing. This vital fact must have some form and expression, must it not?”

“My objection is to the *idea* of eternal punishment as well as the words; my notion of punishment is that it should be reformatory, and when the reformation is accomplished, the punishment should cease.”

“Without entering into the question,” said Elwood, in response, “whether the analogies of Nature will sustain your theory to any considerable extent, when you can show that there is not an eternal difference between the effects of right doing and the effects of wrong doing, it will be time for you to object to all idea of eternal punishment. Does not every act of our lives produce its certain effect?”

“That doesn’t imply eternal torments.”

“I am very willing to have a more refined term; but does not the fact remain that we can not sin with impunity, in view of either the present life or the future life?”

I believe, however, that the punishment of our sins is *moral*, rather than legal; it is their inevitable result, rather than the direct infliction of pain."

"But your doctrine of the Atonement; what could be more absurd and *immoral* than to teach that an innocent person was punished—made to suffer the most painful and ignominious death—for the sins of the guilty?"

"I concede that the doctrine as stated in that way is a stumbling-block; but there is a principle of vicarious suffering in Nature as well as in human life, that must be recognized by both science and philosophy. Vegetables derive their sustenance from the soil and the atmosphere; animals feed on vegetables and on one another; man slays and feeds on the lower animals; and when we come up to the plane of human society, how clear does the law become to us. Soldiers die for their country; parents suffer for their children; friends suffer for friends; good men often suffer most seriously for the wrong doing of others. Would you say that these things are 'immoral?'"

"They are certainly inexplicable; but that does not prove that they are to appease the wrath of a being who is angry on account of people's sins—that would be, at best, a very unsatisfactory solution of the mystery—worse than none at all."

"I am not claiming to solve the mystery. I only point you to these facts, and ask you to take *scientific* notice of them before you condemn the doctrine of vicarious atonement as utterly unjust or immoral. Say what you will about every person's bearing the consequences of his own acts, it is impossible for any one to commit a single transgression without affecting others, directly or indirectly, and causing them to suffer for his wrong doing—something in the nature of *atonement* (if some other word be more agreeable to you, I will not complain) must be made for all our evil deeds! Did not St. Paul express a

great deal of the philosophy of life when he said: 'And without shedding of blood is no remission?'"

"But all these facts," replied the Professor, a little embarrassed, "would not justify a judge in inflicting the penalty of the law upon an innocent person and letting the guilty go free?"

"I frankly confess," replied Elwood, "that the view of the Atonement which represents Christ as a mere *substitute* for man in suffering the penalty of the law, or his death as a mere expiation of human guilt, is objectionable to me, both because of its *prima facie* injustice, and because it is based on the theory that man sustains only a legal relation to his Creator, instead of the *vital* relation that Christ taught and emphasized so earnestly; but whatever criticism I may make upon the symbol, I believe that the truth it represents, or at least, suggests, is universal and eternal." And then, after a pause of some minutes, during which they both unconsciously looked up to the sky, as if in search of some revelation upon the subject in question, he continued: "Although the mystery of this law is insoluble, I believe it lies at the foundation of human society and of all human institutions, and I most earnestly desire to understand the obligations that it suggests and imposes upon me."

"Whether you are preaching the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, or some other 'gospel,' is more than I can make out. I might as well try to explain how there can be three Gods, and yet only one!" answered the Professor, a little sarcastically.

"Neither would I assume to give you a *mathematical* explanation of that question; but the manifold manifestation of Deity and the unceasing operation of his Spirit are very precious truths to me, so far as I am capable of comprehending them; and so long as this doctrine seems to me to express the vital union of the divine

and the human, I shall cherish it most sacredly, notwithstanding its seeming absurdity when regarded merely as a mathematical proposition."

"And what do you say in reference to miracles?" asked the Professor, with consideral pungency: "Do you believe in them in the same manner you believe in the Trinity and the Atonement—that is, by explaining away their force and effect."

"I would rather say," responded Elwood, "that I believe in them in such a manner—I certainly desire to believe in them in such a manner—as to give them their true 'force and effect.'"

"That is, I suppose, as attesting the truth of Christianity and the infallibility of the New Testament writers. Can you explain to me how a miracle—admitting that miracles are possible—could attest the infallibility of the man who performed it? But there is a greater difficulty than that for you to solve. If the orthodox miracle means anything at all, it means something that has been done contrary to the laws of Nature; how can we know that any given result has been produced in that way, unless we have a perfect knowledge of the laws of Nature and the manner of their operation?"

"Your last inquiry is very pertinent, I concede," answered Elwood. "but its force depends very much on what you mean by the 'laws of Nature,' and your suggestion of the limitations of human knowledge applies to one who denies miracles much more than to one who believes in them. To my mind, the fundamental idea of a miracle is not a violation of law, but a manifestation of a higher law than the laws with which we are familiar, rather the manifestation of moral force as opposed to material force. The progress of our age possesses no more prominent feature than the triumph of man's intellect over the material forces of the earth. This is an unceasing miracle (wonder)

to us—how much greater miracle is the triumph of moral force over both material and intellectual force ! ”

“ Then you do not believe the age of miracles is past ? ”

“ I am not curious to measure and define—still less to ‘ materialize ’—this force of which I speak ; but I believe that it works always and everywhere, and that we shall never cease to be surprised at its manifestations in Nature and in human experience. What can I do in the presence of this perpetual power but love, adore and WONDER ? ”

“ And do you still adhere to your infallible, or ‘ inerrant ’ Bible ? ”

“ Why should I need an infallible—I am using the word in its strictest and most literal sense—or inerrant Bible any more than I need an infallible church or an infallible Pope ? Inspiration involves the human coefficient ; and therefore the writers of the Bible can not be considered above all error—they certainly never made such a claim for themselves. They sought to inspire our faculties, rather than to impress their *authority* upon us. The authority which they proclaimed was the authority of the TRUTH ! ” And the doctrine of an infallible Bible, as opposed to the authority of Popes and Kings and ecclesiastical councils, is a very different thing from the same doctrine, as opposed to human progress and development—we can not mean the same thing by it, in all respects, that the Reformers did. Do not understand me, however, as condemning the principle of authority, *in toto*—I only wish to assert its proper relation to our age. ”

“ What basis have you then for either your truths or your symbols ? ”

“ Which reminds me, ” said Elwood, with a smile, “ of certain honest minds who cannot believe that the earth is round until they know what it rests on. ”

“ All you can say about the earth, ” said the Profes-

sor, with slight disgust in his tone, "is that it rests on its relation to all the forces of the universe!"

"And what other basis do spiritual truths need? Is not the fact that they are adapted to man's religious or spiritual nature the most conclusive evidence that can be given in their behalf?"

"Do not beg the question so hastily, I pray you, my friend Elwood. If man has such a religious nature as you claim, you should be able to show that it is an entity, a force, a factor, something to which you can assign a place in the category of cause and effect."

"What I apprehend," replied Elwood, "is that you will not acknowledge the functions of this religious nature, unless I can separate it from all other forces, both physical and psychical, and this is impossible. Such a test would not be scientific, and I am equally certain it would not be religious."

"How then will you prove the functions of the religious nature? Where is your testimony to sustain your claim that these functions have any virtue or effect that we are bound to acknowledge?"

"It is WITHIN, rather than without. If any one were to challenge the value of your scientific study, your ultimate answer would be, 'I *know* what it is worth to me.' So the human soul may be conscious of a vital relation to its Author, even as we are conscious of the relation that our bodies sustain to the visible universe. This relation to Deity is the most certain thing in my consciousness. I believe—I know—that he is, because I am; and I know that I am, because he is!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

POINT AND PURPOSE.

Mina Gilbert's baby is a year old ; and Fred Collins has lately returned to Excelsior and to his duties in his father's store.

Soon after the birth of the child three or four elders of the church had called upon their minister and stated that their wives felt that the church ought not to bear the reproach of having Mina's name on the rolls of its membership. After making the matter a subject of prayer and anxious consideration for several days, Elwood and Alice resolved to prevent her expulsion, if possible. To this end it was decided that she should call upon the wives of all the elders and plead Mina's case before them, and that, preliminary to this, he should read the eighth chapter of St. John as a Scriptural lesson the next Sunday.

It was a bold, strong course for them to take ; but wisdom is justified of her children, and they succeeded.

"Prepare yourself for this office by humiliation and prayer," she said to him, "but remember the word of the Lord to Joshua, 'Be strong and of a good courage ; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed ; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.'"

"Will not your task require much more courage than mine, Alice ?" he answered.

The noble spirit in which Elwood read the words of Christ when the woman taken in adultery was brought before him saved him from adverse criticism, and was not

without its favorable effect upon the women who had been concerned about Mina's remaining in the church.

Although Alice's powers and resources were severely taxed, after her supreme and heroic effort, the Session were easily persuaded that the honor of the church did not require action to be taken against Mina, unless there should be something in her subsequent conduct to call for it.

Elwood showed a like lenient disposition toward Fred Collins when he returned; but, although the young man failed to recognize his obligations to the child he had begotten, or the girl who had given him her love and confidence, there was no call for his exclusion from the church or from society; and so far as outward signs were concerned, the jokes and jibes of his companions were his only punishment.

And shall Mina Gilbert find no compensation for her shame and reproach in the LIFE that rests upon her bosom? If she has sincerely repented of her sin, shall she hear no voice from heaven saying unto her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages?"

Major Collins desired to make more liberal financial provision for the family; but Alice thought that Mina should be rather encouraged to do something for herself, and advised her to take in millinery work and sewing.

"Do you think the people will bring me any?" asked the girl.

"Yes, Mina," was the reply; "if you will be patient and do your work well."

The work came in slowly, but it came steadily; and gradually Mina's self-respect began to come back to her, and a certain measure of peace and hopefulness was restored to her wounded spirit.

Alice rejoiced in this, but was not satisfied.

"The wrong has not been repaired—justice has not

been done to Mina yet," she said to her husband, immediately after Fred's return to the city.

Fred resumed his place in her Sunday School class, and in the course of a month, she renewed the subject: "Henry, I believe that both Major Collins and Fred feel that Mina has never received justice for the wrong she has suffered."

"Mr. Collins has frequently said to me that money could not atone for the wrong done to Mina; but what makes you think Fred feels so too?" he asked.

"I have only mentioned Mina's name in his hearing once since he came back; and his looks and color indicated to me, not only that he feels interested in her, but that his conscience is by no means quiet."

"Do you think I ought to talk to him about it, Alice?"

"It would seem that you ought to do so; but, at the same time, I fear it would have no result."

"Isn't it a duty I ought to discharge whatever the result may be?"

She reflected a few minutes, and answered, "Yes, I believe it is. I have never ceased to pray that justice may be done to Mina; and it may be that in some way my prayers will be answered."

"Does Mina ever speak of Fred, Alice?"

"Only occasionally; but, Henry, woman's love is eternal!—even when she is greatly wronged."

"At any rate, I shall talk to him at the first opportunity; although it is a case requiring considerable wisdom and discretion."

This conversation occurred in the forenoon; and in the afternoon, as Elwood was returning from a visit to some families in "Egypt," he was overtaken by Fred Collins, who was driving a fine-blooded horse hitched to a stylish and costly phaeton. Fred promptly halted and

asked Elwood to ride ; and feeling considerable pride in the spirit and mettle of his steed, proposed a drive to the East End suburbs. When they reached the corporation line, the young man brought his horse to a walk, and, after preserving complete silence for some minutes, said, in an almost stammering manner : " Mr. Elwood, I should like to ask some advice from you to day."

" Very well, Fred," was the prompt reply ; " I should be happy to serve you in any way I can."

Thus encouraged, Fred proceeded, although in a very hesitating manner : " My father and mother are anxious to have me marry Miss Higgins, daughter of Lawyer Higgins, who has recently become so rich. He is said to be a millionaire, and she is his only heir."

" Have you become acquainted with her, Fred ?"

" I have met her a few times, and she seems very willing to receive any attention I may offer her ; but I don't love her, and don't want to marry her."

What Fred desired was something to stimulate him to more active resistance to his mother's will ; but, instead of this, Elwood inquired : " You say your father wants you to marry Miss Higgins ?"

" He has never talked to me about it ; but mother has a great many times ; and when he is present, he seems to agree with her."

" Has she spoken to you about it very often in your father's presence ?"

" Not very often ; I can only remember one or two times ?"

" Perhaps it would be well to consult your father when you are alone with him in the store, so you will clearly understand his wishes." After Elwood said this, there was a pause of several minutes.

" Is that all the advice you can give me on the subject ?" Fred at length asked.

"That is all I can think of just now, Fred."

Elwood resolved not to let the opportunity pass without reminding Fred of his obligations to Mina Gilbert, and, without giving the young man any hint of his object, suggested a return by the street on which the Gilbert cottage was situated; and it so happened that Mina was just entering the gate, with the baby in her arms, as they passed.

"Did you notice Mina Gilbert, Fred?" asked Elwood, a few minutes before they reached the parsonage.

"Yes, Mr. Elwood, and I have never felt right about the way I treated her, but there seemed to be no way to avoid it, and I guess there is no remedy now."

"Are you certain there is none, Fred?"

Elwood asked this question in a very serious manner, and with a direct look into Fred's face, but the only reply he received was this: "There is none that I can see."

"Mina is the girl you ought to marry, Fred—don't you think so?" Fred made no reply to this, but the appeal crashed much deeper into his conscience than Elwood supposed, and when the latter alighted from the buggy, Fred remarked, in a choking voice: "I will never marry Miss Higgins, Mr. Elwood!"

"It was about sunset when Elwood reached his home, and an hour or two afterward he received a message stating that Fred Collins had been dangerously hurt, and requesting him to come to the Collins residence at once.

The young man had attempted to cross a railroad track in front of a rapidly advancing train, with the result that the horse was instantly killed, and Fred was thrown violently to the ground, his head striking in such a manner as to produce a severe concussion of the brain; and when Elwood reached his bedside, his mind was in a state of utter bewilderment and confusion. He scarcely recognized Elwood or Alice, but became much more composed soon after they entered the room.

A delirium of several days followed, during which his life trembled in the most delicate balance ; and the utmost skill of his physicians had to be exercised to save it.

Long and frequent were the visits of both Henry and Alice to Fred's bedside while his delirium continued ; for it was soon discovered that he was much more restless and excited during their absence than when either of them was present.

To his mother's great annoyance, he would frequently call " Mina," in a very plaintive manner—but it was a cry that she could not suppress !

" How delirious he is !" she said to Alice, in a tone of severe mortification, as this cry was uttered once—and only once—in the latter's presence.

Alice made no reply in words ; but her look was so expressive, and yet so kind, that the eyelids of the proud woman drooped very low, and her cheeks mantled for shame.

Fred at length began to convalesce, and again were Elwood and Alice overwhelmed with expressions of gratitude.

" If we could only do something for *you* !" was the repeated expression of both Mr. and Mrs. Collins.

And as Mrs. Collins grasped Alice's hands, she exclaimed, very earnestly : " Mrs. Elwood, Fred owes his life to your nursing and care—how can we ever repay you ? "

CHAPTER XLIV.

TRIAL AND TRIUMPH.

Elwood was seated in his study one morning soon after Fred's recovery was assured, when he felt the touch of a soft hand upon his forehead and the sound of a very clear voice in his ear.

"Henry, I believe that God has given us a duty to perform for Mina Gilbert from which we ought not to shrink—don't you think so?"

"Do you mean that we should urge Fred Collins to marry her in spite of his mother's opposition?"

"Hardly that, Henry; Fred is too feeble now to have his duty urged upon him in just that way, and it might do more harm than good. Besides, it would be much better for both him and Mina to secure Mrs. Collins' consent, and that is what I want to do, if possible."

"I know, Alice," he answered, as he gave her a look of supreme admiration, "how easy it is for you to persuade people to do right; but I fear you will find this the hardest task of your life. Mrs. Collins' strong will and family pride must both be overcome before she will yield; but, on the other hand, she has often said she would do anything that you might ask, and perhaps she would not refuse even this."

"I don't want to ask her to consent for my sake, Henry; I want both Fred and her to see that he ought to keep his promise and become a real father to her child."

"I know that is the noble principle on which you

have always said we should teach and preach ; but I fear it will be very hard for you to apply it to Mrs. Collins, especially in reference to Fred's marriage."

"Well, I shall first try to convince her that Fred ought to marry Mina ; and if that fails, I will claim her oft repeated promises to me. Nothing must be left undone to secure justice for Mina and her baby. I have prayed for strength and wisdom.

"When do you propose to see her, Alice?" he asked.

"This afternoon, Henry. Fred goes out riding every afternoon, and he will not be at home, so I must improve the opportunity to see her. I wish you would see Mr. Collins some time during the day, and talk to him, so that when he comes home in the evening they will be ready to confer about it."

Elwood's task was a very easy one. As soon as the subject was introduced, Major Collins responded: "I was going to call on you this evening and ask your counsel. Fred spoke to me about it himself yesterday, declaring that he still loved Mina Gilbert and would never marry any one else."

"I believe Fred is sincerely sorry for all the trouble he has caused her," said Elwood.

"I am certain he is ; he had somehow gotten the idea that I wanted him to marry Lawyer Higgins' daughter, but I assured him that I had nothing of the kind in mind. I did not express a final opinion as to what he ought to do in Mina's case, as I wished to see you first ; but I told him what I have often told you, that he had done Mina a wrong that no money could repair."

There was a pause of several minutes, during which Elwood wrestled with the question whether he should urge any further duty upon Collins or not ; and before he had come to a decision upon this point, the latter continued : "I fear, Mr. Elwood, I have not done all that I ought to

do about this matter. I will talk to Mrs. Collins to-night, and will come to see you and Mrs. Elwood about it to-morrow."

It required a pretty severe struggle for him to come to the resolution to speak to Mrs. Collins on the subject, but he fully intended to do as he said.

"Mrs. Elwood is going to see Mrs. Collins this afternoon and urge her consent to Fred's marrying Mina," said Elwood.

Collins' face brightened for a moment or so at this announcement; but he made no further remark, except to repeat that he would call at the parsonage the next day.

Alice introduced her subject soon after being admitted to Mrs. Collins' presence. "You know, Mrs. Collins," she said, "how much I have been interested in Mina Gilbert."

"Indeed I do, Mrs. Elwood, and I hope she feels very grateful to you for all you have done."

Mrs. Collins said this with perfect sincerity; but she was already a little nervous.

"Mrs. Collins, do you think everything has been done for Mina that ought to be done?"

There was a decided feeling of resentment in Mrs. Collins' breast as she listened to this query—but the voice that she heard was the same voice that had prayed so earnestly for the life of her twins, and the eyes that were turned so steadily toward her were the eyes that had dropped so many tears upon their dead faces—and, as she remembered this, she answered, with the best grace she could: "I certainly don't see how *you* could do any more for her than you have done; and Joshua says he has wanted to give them more money than he has given them. If they need anything more, they shall have it—anything you say!"

"It isn't money that Mina needs, Mrs. Collins!"

“What then? She cannot expect to be taken back into society; she will have to suffer the consequences of her sin.”

“Yes, Mrs. Collins,” Alice replied, in a tone of intense feeling that greatly annoyed her listener, “how much she has already suffered for it. And hasn’t she proved a true mother to her baby?”

“I believe she has; at least I have heard no complaint against her since the baby was born, and I sincerely hope she will redeem herself.”

“Mrs. Collins, didn’t Fred promise to marry Mina?”

“The mention of Fred’s name in connection with Mina’s well nigh provoked an outbreak of resentment; but again Mrs. Collins remembered all that had been done for Lulu and Lucy, as well as the kindly offices for Fred during his recent affliction, and she answered very kindly, but with some warmth: “I suppose he did; but girls should learn not to trust the promises of young men whose station in life is so different from theirs.”

“Is not Fred the father of her child?”

“He has never denied that, I believe; although for some time I doubted whether he was.”

These last answers were uttered in a very nervous manner, and with a manifest trembling of voice. Mrs. Collins’ words might seem almost defiant, but the clear voice and steady eye of her inquisitor were breaking her down. The strong woman has met one stronger than herself—what shall she do?

Alice sincerely pitied her; but she thought of Mina and her baby, and rallied for a final effort.

“Mrs. Collins, if Fred is the father of Mina’s child, and if he solemnly promised to marry her, do you not think he ought to fulfill his promise and repair the wrong he has done her?”

Had the little woman’s steady eye failed her for a sin-

gle moment, or had the light on her face paled in the slightest degree, her cause might have been lost. Mrs. Collins actually looked around in search of some means of escape—but could find none. She must either surrender, or sorely wound the friend who had done so much for her and hers. The appeal for justice must either be granted or refused; and she could not rise from her chair until the question was decided!

And that tender, yet searching appeal to her own conscience—could she give a base answer to that?

The struggle was a severe one; her bosom heaved, and her face burned with intensest feeling; but at length she said, in an almost appealing tone: “Mrs. Elwood, do *you* think he ought to do so?” And, still hoping for escape: “If you were in my place, would you consent to such a marriage?”

“I have thought Fred ought to marry her from the day she came to my house and told me her trouble,” was the calm reply; “and his duty would be the same, if he were my son instead of yours.”

“Mrs. Elwood, I have always said that no request of yours should ever be refused.”

“I am not asking this on my own account, Mrs. Collins, but because Fred ought to keep his promise to Mina, and because the child is his as well as hers.”

“But the disgrace, Mrs. Elwood?”

“Fred ought to do what is right, regardless of consequences; but, Mrs. Collins, there will be no such ‘disgrace’ as you fear. Fred will be respected for doing justice to Mina; and I believe that in spite of all that has occurred they love each other still, and that, if they were married, they would live together very happily.”

“Perhaps Fred ought”—here Mrs. Collins’ voice faltered, but she presently continued; “Mrs. Elwood, you have been such a friend to us, that no request of yours

can be refused; and I am sure you would not ask us to do anything that is not right. We will talk the matter over this evening, and if Fred still wishes to marry Mina, and his father is willing, I will give him my consent."

If Mrs. Collins had any sense of humiliation over this yielding to Alice's wishes, it was wholly removed by the latter's warm kiss and hearty thanks.

And with tears of unfeigned joy in her eyes, she said as she took her leave: "Mrs. Collins, you must never speak again of any obligations you are under to Mr. Elwood or to me. When Fred marries Mina Gilbert, they will all be discharged many times over!"

A few weeks afterward there was a quiet wedding in Alice Elwood's parlor; and then she thanked God, not because she had won so great a triumph, but because Mina Gilbert's wrong was repaired by a happy marriage with the lover of her childhood.

CHAPTER XLV.

ADVICE AND ADMONITION.

Time moves on, and another baby boy (now two years old) has crowned the union of Henry and Alice Elwood—another “image of his mother,” only the eyes were a shade lighter and the features a little more delicate than those of his brother Carl, who was four years older.

No pressure of other duties ever caused Alice to neglect the caressing and fondling of her children, as well as the more strictly necessary attention that they required; and in their responses to her manifestations of maternal sympathy, she found a well-spring of joy unutterable.

“We must never fret at them or scold them,” she said to her husband, “they are too precious for that. We must require them to obey us promptly in all things; but should we not teach them this lesson, so they will *love* to obey us? And whatever punishment we inflict upon them—if it should ever be necessary for us to punish them directly(?)—ought we not to administer it with perfect good temper and in sincerest love?”

And as a reward of this faithful discipline of herself as well as her children, they rejoiced in her presence as in the sunlight, and her gentlest word secured the promptest and most willing obedience always and everywhere.

But notwithstanding this supreme domestic bliss, and the ever-increasing attachment of his people, Elwood’s ministerial life was far from being in all respects a bed of roses.

If his larger interpretation of the doctrines of his church had been satisfactory to his own conscience, they were by no means satisfactory to all his ministerial brethren. As the old house or other building must be torn down before a new one can be erected on its site, so he often found it necessary, in order to present the more spiritual meaning of both the creed and the Scripture, to reject the literal meaning.

Of course, all preachers must do this, more or less; but no earnest defender of the faith is ever pleased to see other men exercising more liberty in this respect than he claims for himself!

In both philosophy and theology, it is very natural for every one to feel that beyond his orbit all is chaos and confusion.

It was at least a thing to be expected, that some members of Excelsior Presbytery should be seriously concerned about the heterodox character of Elwood's preaching. And a striking peculiarity of most of their criticisms was, that they did not represent him as preaching what was false, or even unscriptural, so much as preaching contrary to the doctrines of the Presbyterian church! As Elwood's own conscience had been severely exercised upon this point for several years, his sensitiveness in reference to it may be easily imagined.

The sharp arrows struck the weakest joints of his armor, and sometimes pierced him to the quick!

At first the cloud was only the size of a man's hand; but for the last two or three years it had been gradually increasing and growing a little darker. Elwood had as little concern for his personal interests as any man could be expected to have in his situation; but these strictures of his ministerial brethren, involving as they did an issue of personal honor, had brought him to a more serious con-

sideration of his right to occupy a Presbyterian pulpit than had occupied his mind in all previous years.

But whenever he felt that he must withdraw from the Presbyterian church because he could no longer endure the least intimation of unfaithfulness to her creed, the eager and expectant faces of his congregation rose up before him, and he could almost hear them crying to him for the bread of life. And those increasing appeals for his sympathy, his counsel, his help—could he turn his back on these?

If Elwood had stood alone, his keen sense of honor and his desire to avoid all misunderstanding and controversy might ere this have caused his transfer to the Congregational communion, as he was quietly advised that a number of Congregational churches in the state were ready to call for his services as soon as he might signify a readiness to change his ecclesiastical relations.

But he was not alone!

"I will follow you wherever you go in preaching the gospel of the kingdom," said the devoted Alice; "but O, Henry, these people love you so, and are so anxious to hear you preach every Sunday, how could you grieve and disappoint them by resigning?"

"But, Alice, a preacher's honor must be above reproach!"

"And yours is," she replied, very earnestly, "only the Lord has seen fit to chasten you that you may serve him more acceptably. And you are doing more and more for his cause, Henry!"

But this was not the opinion of a very large portion (perhaps a majority) of the ministers of Excelsior Presbytery; and during one of its recent sessions, although no one sought to bring Elwood's case before the body, there was a large amount of private consultation in regard to it—some of which came to Elwood's ears and some did not—

and soon after the adjournment, Dr. Princeton and Dr. Wilson waited upon him and told him, that after an informal conference with several other members of the Presbytery, both lay and clerical, they felt it to be their duty, as servants of the Divine Master, to admonish him that he was preaching in such a way as to awaken the most serious apprehension in their minds concerning his orthodoxy and his faithfulness to his ordination vows.

The day after Elwoods's return from the meeting of his Presbytery, he had a long conversation with Alice upon the subject.

"These brethren," he said, "are ministers of large experience, particularly Dr. Princeton, and are influenced by the purest motives. They have not spoken to me in this way without the gravest consideration and perhaps the most earnest prayer—and they represent a great many besides themselves. Does not this make my duty very clear? I can not stay in the Presbyterian church without suppressing my thought and my speech, or becoming a disturber. Can I hope to be useful when my people learn that I am suspected of serious error in respect to the doctrines of the church, even if I should never be brought to trial? There are other churches where I can enjoy all the liberty I desire, and where I will not offend the consciences of my professional brethren. It certainly seems to me, I ought to go to one of these, Alice."

He spoke with such earnestness and determination, and she herself saw the gravity of the situation so clearly, that she was at a loss for an answer for several minutes. But her woman's wit did not fail her in the crisis, and, after due reflection, she said to him: "Henry, I know how seriously all this affects you, and how anxious you are to take the right course; and much as I love our church, I can not ask you to remain its pastor after you are *fully satisfied* that you ought to withdraw from its pulpit—but

will you make me one promise?—you will not resign until you have taken counsel with all your elders and a number of your confidential friends? ”

While she was saying this, the door-bell rang ; and, without waiting to answer her, Elwood went to the door, and in a moment Major Collins and Deacon Simpkinson were ushered into the room.

“ We were just driving by,” said Collins, as soon as they were seated, “ and stopped to notify you, Mr. Elwood, that the trustees and members of the session had an informal consultation in my office this morning, and we all thought the time has come to enlarge our church, as it is so hard to find seats for all who attend our services, and we would like to have you call a special meeting after the prayer-meeting next Wednesday night to consider the matter and form plans for carrying the project into execution. We ought to have at least twice the seating capacity we now have—don’t you think so, Deacon Simpkinson? ”

“ It’s astonishing how many people are attending our church,” said Simpkinson, in reply ; “ and the constant increase in membership ought to make us all thankful that our minister’s labors have been so abundantly blessed. Several of my tenants have expressed a wish to unite with us, and I urged them to do so at our next communion.”

“ Those are some fine houses you have built lately,” said Collins, “ quite an improvement on the old ones.”

“ Yes, I have found it much better to put up comfortable and substantial buildings, and not charge too much rent for them. Mrs. Simpkinson says we will enjoy life more in this way, even if we don’t make as much money. I don’t claim, however, to have gotten over my worldly-mindedness. It’s a constant battle—it’s a constant battle—but I hope I shall get to heaven at last.” Then turning to Elwood, he continued : “ I am very much interested in this proposal for enlarging our church, and will contribute

whatever amount may be necessary to insure its success. Mrs. Simpkinson says we ought to do everything we can to encourage you and Mrs. Elwood in your labors among us."

And with a few more expressions of their interest in the enlargement of the church and of their desire to accommodate as many people as might want to hear Elwood's preaching, the two men withdrew, repeating their request for a special meeting the next Wednesday night.

Alice's heart rose in high triumph during this interview, but soon after they were gone, Henry reminded her that he had requested Dr. Princeton and Dr. Wilson to call upon him the next evening for an explanation of his views."

"This will be a severe ordeal for you, Henry," she responded, "but I know you will be equal to it. They are both strong men, but you must be stronger than they are."

"Stronger than both of them?"

"You don't know yet how far both of them may be against you, Henry. I have never heard Dr. Princeton preach, but I heard Dr. Wilson once, and"—she added, with a little archness—"I also heard him express his opinion of your preaching!"

"He is thoroughly in earnest in this matter, Alice, and really fears I am departing from true orthodoxy."

"I have no doubt of that, but wait till you meet him, and then you will see whether he wants to burn you for heresy or not," she quietly answered.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CONFERENCE AND CONSULTATION.

Just before the two divines reached Elwood's house they discussed the question which of them should first introduce the subject to him, and to what points of departure from sound doctrine they should first direct his attention ; but they could come to no definite conclusion as to the *modus operandi* that would be most advisable.

To their great surprise, very soon after they were received by Elwood and Alice and were comfortably seated in the parlor, he thus addressed them : “ Brethren, I have long desired just such an interview as this, as I seriously feel the need of counsel from those who are older in the ministry than myself. The demands of my pulpit in this city have caused me to read a great many books and to do a large amount of independent thinking. These mental processes have raised a great many questions and doubts in my mind, some of which I have solved and some I have not. I frankly confess that on some points of the Confession of Faith I am in such a state of mind, that I have doubted my right to remain in the ministry of the Presbyterian church ; but I can truly say, that thus far I have acted in good conscience and have constantly sought the divine direction ; but it has never been possible for me to determine just how much freedom of thought and latitude of interpretation are consistent with the vows of a Presbyterian minister. If you can give me any light on this subject, it will be gratefully received.”

Dr. Princeton was first to reply : " We did not expect to have the matter presented to us in this way, but since you have so presented it, it seems to me the case is quite clear. If you hold views essentially contrary to the Confession of Faith, which I trust is not the case, you can not consistently remain in the ministry of the Presbyterian church. I would feel bound to say this to you, much as I should regret the necessity of your withdrawing from our church."

After some reflection, Dr. Wilson at length spoke : " We have come for a friendly conference, Mr. Elwood, not with the expectation of trying you for heresy. Unless your departure from the doctrines of the Confession is *essential*, I would not advise you to withdraw from our church, while your ministry is as useful as it now appears to be. But what are the doubts and questions of which you speak?"

At considerable length, Elwood stated his views in reference to nearly all the leading doctrines of the Confession of Faith, giving the reason for all his conclusions, and replying to all their questions with marked frankness and clearness.

On some points they confessed that he was more orthodox than they expected to find him; but they were both "greatly surprised," and Dr. Princeton was "shocked," at some of his utterances, especially in reference to the "inerrancy" of the Scriptures, which Elwood frankly said he could no longer believe, in view of all the errors that had been shown to exist in both the Old and New Testaments.

Nearly two hours were spent in this way, all the men admiring the quiet ease and grace with which Alice listened to the discussion, and the interest she manifested in all that was said; and when it was concluded, Elwood again asked for whatever counsel they could give him.

Noticing an embarrassed look on Dr. Princeton's face, Alice withdrew from the room, and then he spoke:

"Mr. Elwood, as you have requested our counsel about your proper course, I will give you mine frankly and faithfully. Highly as I respect your Christian character, I feel bound to say to you, that while you hold your present views in reference to the 'inerrancy' of the Bible, and have such peculiar ideas concerning the Trinity and the Atonement, you cannot consistently remain in the ministry of the Presbyterian church. Admitting all that may be claimed about the right of a man to hold and express his own opinions, yet as a minister you have solemnly given your subscription to the Confession of Faith, and you should adhere to that subscription as long as you occupy a Presbyterian pulpit." Then, after a few minutes' reflection, during which he looked at Elwood very kindly and earnestly, Dr. Princeton continued: "Perhaps your views on these points are not final, and the Lord may yet show you wherein you are in error. I would suggest that you make the whole matter a subject of anxious prayer for several days before taking final action."

Dr. Wilson being also pressed for his counsel, replied; "Many of your views seem very peculiar to me, and some of them are very far from strict orthodoxy as I understand it. I can not tell you how much freedom or range a Presbyterian minister may lawfully claim; for I have been very much perplexed with that question myself, although by no means to the extent that you have; but I can safely repeat Dr. Princeton's counsel to pray very earnestly over the matter before taking final action or withdrawing from the Presbyterian church."

In a few minutes after they had both concluded, Alice re-entered the room, and noticing that the conversation had taken a more general turn, she took a chair, and by a few kindly questions to her husband's visitors, drew from

each of them a quite interesting account of his work and ministry, which considerably diverted their minds from the more serious errand on which they had come.

Her friendship was genuine, and her sympathy sincere and hearty; but she was not unwilling to entertain them in this manner, and they justly felt honored by her lively interest in every thing pertaining to their labors as ministers of Christ.

And was she not serving the cause of Christ as well as her husband's cause by this exercise of her conversational gifts?

After they were gone—not without receiving from her a cordial invitation to visit the city at some future time with their wives—she said to Elwood, a little playfully: “You will not resign your pastorate till they get the church enlarged, will you?”

“Suppose they bring charges against me before the Presbytery?”

“Neither of them will do that, in my opinion, Henry.”

“Why not, Alice?”

“They have too much sympathy with your views—at least Dr. Wilson has—and Dr. Princeton, much as he deplores your ‘errors,’ would be very reluctant to prosecute you for them before the Presbytery, except from the most serious sense of duty.”

The two ministers had a long consultation together before separating for a return to their respective homes.

“Such views as Elwood avows show a peculiarly dangerous tendency,” said Dr. Princeton, very gravely. “I admire his excellence of character and integrity of purpose; but these will not prevent the evil influence of his errors, so far as they may be spread among his people.”

“I have talked to some of his elders and members since I came to the city,” replied Dr. Wilson, “and none

of them complained about any false doctrine that he preached."

"That only proves how dangerous such preaching is; it undermines the faith of the people before they are aware of it. It almost appears to me that Presbytery should take some action in reference to his preaching."

† "Which of his heresies would you most condemn, Dr. Princeton?"

"That would be a rather difficult question to answer; for it is not so much an erroneous view of this or that tenet that I deplore in him as the general tone in which he speaks of our Calvinistic system of doctrine, and the freedom of interpretation which he claims for every article of the Confession of Faith. On the other hand, he has built up his church in a wonderful manner, and his people are very much attached to him—didn't Mrs. Elwood say to us that there was to be a meeting next Wednesday night to form some plans for enlarging the church?—and if Presbytery should take any action against him, no one can predict what would be the result."

"He certainly has a great many views that I consider unsound," said Dr. Wilson, in response, "but how finely he reasons, and how clear and concise were all his statements. His theory that the Bible should be studied *inductively* rather than deductively, seemed to me very suggestive, as well as his declaration that the church must keep pace with the progress of the age and the various evolutions of civilization. I confess I also admired some of his statements in reference to Total Depravity, the Trinity and the Atonement, heterodox as his views appear to be on these and some other points."

"Ah, Dr. Wilson, these fine phrases that he uses contain a latent heresy that we as defenders of sound doctrine would do well to watch very closely. German Rationalism has at last reached even our theological semi-

naries; and some of our professors are teaching not only that verbal errors have occurred in transcribing the Scriptures, but that the original manuscripts may not have been free from error, as they were written in human language and by finite men. If Elwood were to be elected to a professorship in any of our seminaries, I should advocate the disapproval of such a choice by the General Assembly, on account of the effect of his teaching on theological students; but, as I said to you, I am not clear whether any action should be taken in reference to his preaching; not only on account of the peculiar attachment his church has for him, but because I know not how much sympathy there may be with his views among the ministers and elders of our Presbytery, and also because it is very hard to draw any dividing line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy at the present day. At any rate, I shall not consider it my duty to bring his case before our Presbytery, unless his errors should become more serious in their effects than they now appear to be.”

“And I feel the same way,” responded Dr. Wilson.

CHAPTER XLVII.

LIGHT AND LIBERTY.

As soon as the plan for enlarging Elwood's church was determined on, the work was prosecuted with a vigor and enthusiasm that greatly surprised him.

Deacon Simpkinson was put at the head of the committee to canvass for subscriptions; and as his own name headed the list for a much larger sum than any one expected him to give, his example was a decided stimulus to others; and he himself felt greatly rewarded for his liberality by the commendations of those he called on.

After spending considerable time in canvassing among the members, he happened to pass Gibbert's store, and remembering that he had occasionally seen its proprietor at church, he stopped to solicit his subscription.

"Certainly, certainly," said Gibbert, as soon as the subject was presented to him, "how much do you want from me?"

"Well, any amount you may feel like giving—according to your means—as the Lord has prospered you."

"The Lord hasn't prospered me so far as I know in the least, Mr. Simpkinson; on the contrary, I have had to work like the d—l for every thing I get; but I am so much interested in this enterprise that I will give as much in proportion to my means as you have given!"

"That seems quite reasonable," said Simpkinson, "and I am very glad that you appreciate the value of the gospel so highly."

“Never mind about ‘the value of the gospel,’ Mr. Simpkinson—it is no particular value to me, I am very certain—but I am ready to do as I said. How much have you subscribed?”

“One thousand dollars!” replied Simpkinson, with an air of triumph.

“Very well,” said Gibbert, “you are reported in commercial circles to be worth about a million dollars, but I won’t stop to inquire about that. Let us, to be safe, divide it by two and call it half that amount, five hundred thousand. Now, as I am not worth over five hundred dollars at the utmost, and, since you have been so liberal as to subscribe one thousand dollars, here is my proportion”—throwing down a silver dollar on the table—“and I hope it will do you all much good.”

Simpkinson was very much nonplused, and hesitated about taking the dollar; but not wishing to offend Gibbert by refusing it, finally placed it in the purse with other sums he had collected during the day, and took his departure.

He had never encountered such an *argumentum ad hominem* before, and he found in it abundant “food for reflection.”

On looking through the list of subscribers when he reached his home in the evening, he was greatly surprised to find, that, so far as he could estimate their means, his *proportion* was the smallest of all; and when he stated this fact to his wife, she urged him to double his subscription, which he did the next day.

When the enlarged building was nearly ready for dedication, Dr. Wilson was selected to preach the sermon for the occasion; and a few weeks previous to the date of the exercises, he received an invitation from Elwood and Alice to bring his wife and two children and stay with them over

Sunday, and as many days during the week following as they could arrange to spend in Excelsior.

They arrived in the forenoon on Saturday, and long before the dawn of evening, Mrs. Wilson and her two little girls, aged six and three years respectively, felt entirely at home in the genial atmosphere of the Elwood parsonage.

And what a glorious frolic the four children had that afternoon!

In the evening, as they were all seated in the sitting-room, discussing various topics of interest, Doctor Wilson turned toward Elwood and said:

"My dear friend, the question that you raised during my recent interview with you in connection with Dr. Princeton is one that has occupied my mind for several years; and it is still impossible for me to come to a final conclusion in reference to it. I wish I knew just how much liberty of thought a Presbyterian minister in this age of the world ought to claim for himself—perhaps you could give me the benefit of your experience in reference to it."

"The question has been on my mind, too, for several years," Elwood modestly replied, "but a complete and definite solution of the problem seems as far off as ever."

"But we *must* solve it, must we not?" inquired Dr. Wilson, quite earnestly.

"We must at least exercise our minds upon it," Elwood responded, slowly.

"But that is a very painful process—at least I have found it so."

"So we find the exercise of our judgment and reason in the administrative part of our work sometimes painful, do we not?"

As Elwood said this, he noticed that Mrs. Wilson's face was brightening with interest, and she gave her husband a very sympathetic and encouraging look.

"My wife has often told me," said Dr. Wilson,

“that perhaps I need this very exercise of mind and conscience.”

Mrs. Wilson's face colored at this; but one bright glance of sympathy and approval from Alice restored her ease and self-possession.

“You can surely give me the benefit of your experience,” repeated Dr. Wilson.

“I have at least found out that it is a life-long problem.”

“Never to be solved?”

“It is certainly something more than a sum in Arithmetic or a theorem in Geometry, Dr. Wilson. It requires our highest and best faculties, and I do not believe that any one can give us a rule or formula for its solution.”

“Must we be forever learning, and yet be unable to come to a knowledge of the truth?” inquired Dr. Wilson, in a discouraged tone.

“I would rather say that we can constantly get more light upon it, if we pray for it.”

Again Mrs. Wilson looked at her husband sympathetically.

“I have prayed most earnestly,” he responded, “and I believe the Lord has heard and answered my prayers in some measure; and my wife assures me”—there was only a little color in Mrs. Wilson's face this time—“that if I continue to seek light, it will be given to me as I need it.”

[Why was it, that notwithstanding the high enjoyment and perfect freedom of the children while this conversation was going on, they made not the slightest annoyance or disturbance?—it was only occasionally that Alice turned her attention toward them, and showed her interest in their plays.]

“I believe that God has given me some light, too,” said Elwood; “but I have had to employ my utmost

powers of mind and conscience in determining what course I ought to pursue."

"You can surely tell what a Presbyterian minister ought to do when he no longer believes the Confession of Faith, can you not?" asked Dr. Wilson.

"I suppose," replied Elwood, thoughtfully, "that if any minister disbelieves the Confession, or any essential part of it, *in toto*, he ought to withdraw from the Presbyterian church; but between such a position and the literal acceptance of its every article and section, there is a very wide middle-ground—how wide I would not undertake to say."

"Then we are to determine for ourselves how much of the Confession we may believe, and how much we may disbelieve?"

"I would hardly put it that way; but we are to exercise our own consciences upon that question, and act according to the light that is given us; always recognizing the right of our Presbytery to call us to account if we become transgressors or disturbers. But, Dr. Wilson, in connection with this question of believing certain doctrines, may we not very properly ask *how* we are required to believe in order to be true to our subscription?"

"I do not quite understand you."

"Must we believe every doctrine in its most literal sense, or shall we consider these various doctrines of the Confession as embodiments of truth in the imperfect language of men, and therefore subject to constant analysis and interpretation?"

"We must certainly interpret them to a great extent," said Doctor Wilson, "but when we go so far as to reject the literal meaning of any portion of the Confession, can we, in good conscience, still claim to believe it? Are we not in great danger here of merely playing on words—of

lowering our own standard of truth and honor, and also of deceiving others?"

"That all depends, I think, on the spirit by which we are actuated. In teaching your children you may tell them that the sun rises in the east, although you know such is not literally the case; but if you were trying to deceive them, your words would be base. It is our purpose—our ideal—that we should watch rather than our language, although language is very important. We must be loyal to the creed of our church, but we must also be loyal to the truth. We must remember our ordination vows; but we must also remember our obligation to receive the light and to bear witness to the light. We must distill the doctrines in the laboratory of our Reason, (I use the term in its most comprehensive sense), before we can preach the vital truth that they contain."

"Is there any real conflict of duty in all this, Mr. Elwood?"

"I presume not; but there is a seeming conflict, and we must, at least, be called to choose between the lower duty and the higher—should not the higher duty in all cases be preferred?"

"But when we assume such a function as this, is there not great danger of our becoming proud and presumptuous, and thereby unfitting ourselves for our sacred office?"

"That objection would lie against every function we may exercise, Dr. Wilson. In this, as in every thing else, we should constantly seek to be 'converted' and to become as little children; but our personality is even more important than that of teachers. Hence, every preacher should possess a living soul, and should interpret all doctrines in the fear of God, and in the light of their relation to all truth. If our business is to quicken the spiritual life of our people, we need to be ourselves quickened by the

Spirit of the Lord ; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is LIBERTY ! I do not object to the infallibility of the Pope because he is a bad man, or to the infallibility of the Catholic church because it is a bad institution ; but because to recognize the infallibility of either would do violence to my reason, and deprive me of many individual functions which it is both my privilege and duty to exercise. Our Confession of Faith, when first framed, was very largely an assertion of individual liberty and a protest against authority ; and to make it a means of binding men's consciences and restricting their thought—which we are apt to do when we interpret it too literally—is not only to misunderstand it, but to pervert its meaning and object.”

“ Do men claim this freedom in other walks of life ? ” said Dr. Wilson ; “ rather, are they not surrounded with the most rigid limitations in every business or profession in which they may engage ? ”

“ Limitations and restrictions are certainly to be found everywhere ; but on the other hand, in all vocations, from the very highest to the very lowest, the personality of the workman is a factor of more or less importance. We have a written Constitution and written laws ; but we also need a President and other executive officers with honest hearts and clear heads. There are many established rules of war ; but the genius of commanders frequently wins victories by disregarding and rising above all these. In merchandise, in the mechanical arts, and even in the simplest forms of manual labor, some individual discretion is necessary ; and the higher and more complex the function that is exercised, the wider must be the range of this discretion.”

“ While I admit the force of all you say, I would yet fear,” said Dr. Wilson, very thoughtfully, “ that if all our preachers claimed as large a measure of freedom as you claim for them, there would be an end to all church order

and discipline, and that thus you would defeat the very object you have in view. Have you thought of that?"

"My reply to that would be, Dr. Wilson, that the order of the solar system is secured by permitting each planet to move in its own orbit, only requiring it to obey the force that secures its proper relation to the central sun. If our preachers are ever loyal to the principles and teachings of the Christ, the more liberty they may enjoy, and the higher will be the quality of their preaching."

"But are we not under obligation to our co-presbyters to be very faithful to the doctrines which are the bond of union between us? Are we not bound to interpret these doctrines as they do—substantially?"

"Our obligation to them, I should rather say, is one of good faith, sincere purpose and devotion to truth. They have a right to ask all these things of us; but they have no right to bind our consciences or restrict our vision. When the Lord speaks to us, we must obey his voice, rather than the voice of man. The church order and organization belongs to those who give the wider and more liberal interpretation to the creeds and formulas, as well as to those who construe them more literally. Was not President Lincoln most loyal and patriotic when he said, in effect, that it might be necessary for him to act contrary to the letter of the Constitution in order to save the life of the nation?"

"But will not the laity lose confidence in us, if—to use your figure—we seek too wide an orbit for ourselves?"

"Not if we trust them and let them know that we are earnest seekers of light and truth, and that the liberty we desire is the liberty to preach the truth to them!"

After her company were gone, Alice wrote to her father :

EXCELSIOR, October 1, 188—.

MY DEAR FATHER :

Our new church—we call it new because it has been enlarged to more than twice its former seating capacity—was dedicated last Sunday, and now we hope that all who wish to attend our services can do so without any one's having to stand. The acoustic properties of the room are so good, and Henry's voice is so clear, that he can be distinctly heard by every one, and I have good reason to believe that all who hear him are edified and profited by his preaching.

I am certain that the severe discipline of mind and conscience he has undergone on account of his theological views, and the criticisms of his ministerial brethren, have made his preaching more spiritual as well as more eloquent. He is not yet entirely free from all questions concerning his faithfulness to his ordination vows, but he has at least learned that he is not bound to leave the Presbyterian church, merely because he takes a larger, and, as I tell him, a more spiritual view of its doctrines than he did when he was ordained.

He has been told during the past few years by a very large number of both men and women that his manner of presenting the truths of Christianity has saved them from skepticism and unbelief, and enabled them to see very clearly that there is no real conflict between faith and reason, or between science and religion.

But the most encouraging testimony has been from the poor and hard-working people in the church who have expressed their appreciation of his preaching, and have so often told both him and me how valuable his sympathy and counsel have been in helping them to bear their burdens and maintain their families.

Clara Martin continues instant in every good work among the poor and the outcast of the city. None are too low and degraded for her interest and attention, and her efforts to rescue and save the fallen have been attended with the most wonderful success.

And she counts it such a privilege to labor as she does ; indeed, she has often said to me that in this privilege she has found abundant compensation for all she has suffered !

She and Dr. Vernon have often met at the bedsides of the sick, especially among the poorer classes, and have learned to appreciate each other's character very highly, although there seems to be little or no sign of a renewal of their engagement. There was always something about their separation that I could

not understand—it seemed so necessary, and yet so unnecessary! Although they have been estranged for so many years, how happy they might make each other yet, if their former affection were renewed.

Harry Howard, the New York boy, in whom Henry became so much interested while he was pursuing his theological studies, and of whom you have often heard him speak, after having graduated at ——— College, has lately completed his three years' course at Union Seminary, and has been licensed and ordained to preach. He is temporarily supplying the pulpit of the Presbyterian church at Geneva, some twenty-five miles from Excelsior; and Henry thinks from the manner in which they speak of his preaching, that they will certainly desire his services as their permanent pastor. Henry feels an intense interest in the young man's ministry on account of the affection he had for him when he was a child, and also because his talents are so promising.

Our high congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Allison over the birth of the daughter they propose to christen "Alice Elwood." Tell Blanche I want to see my little namesake—and her mother—very, very soon.

Carl sends his love and kisses to his dear grandpa; and little Ernest promises to be wise enough to know you when you visit us next Christmas.

From Your Affectionate Daughter,

ALICE.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY!

"It is very true, Alice, that the vote in the Assembly was unanimous in favor of revision; but the Committee are instructed to propose no change in the Confession that will impair the Calvinistic system of doctrine—it is only the beginning of a severe doctrinal conflict in our church."

It was thus that Henry Elwood addressed the wife who sat by his side the evening of his return from the Presbyterian General Assembly, which was held in Saratoga, in the year of grace, 1890.

"Will they not be likely to prepare a report that will be satisfactory to both the revisionists and the anti-revisionists?" she asked.

"I do not see how it will be possible for them to do so; and even if they should present a satisfactory compromise on the *Calvinistic* issue, there are other questions that will agitate the church for several years to come."

"*You* do not fear this conflict, Henry?"

"I hope I do not," he calmly replied; "but since mingling with the other delegates at the Assembly, I feel that the time has come for me to speak out more clearly, and let my people know what interpretation I put upon many of the doctrines of the Confession of Faith—don't you think so, Alice?"

"I always like to see the birds stretch their wings and soar—that is what God made them for!" she answered, in her most winsome and inspiring tone.

Two or three months later, Elwood received notice

that he had been appointed to deliver the charge to Harry Howard, on the occasion of his installation as pastor of the Geneva church, which was to take place at the next regular meeting of Excelsior Presbytery in that place.

"What memories this awakens in my mind," he said to Alice, as she came into his study—why was it that she nearly always presented herself before him when her presence was especially desired?—one day, just before he began the preparation of this discourse. "It is nearly twenty years since I first saw Harry Howard, then a small and delicate child in our Mission Sunday School in New York; and, although he was unusually bright and interesting, I did not think at that time of his ever becoming a preacher—much less, that I would be called upon to deliver a charge to him as the pastor of so large a church as we have in Geneva."

"'Cast thy bread upon the waters'—the promises of the Scripture never fail, Henry," she quietly and pleasantly answered.

"I could only assume a small proportion of credit, at best, for all that has been done for Harry; but I greatly rejoice that he has become so fine a preacher."

"I know to whom he feels most indebted for early influences—he expressed himself to me on that point very clearly the last time he was at our house. He is your 'spiritual child;' at least, he so regards himself."

"However that may be, Alice, I am very anxious to make my charge to him something more than a perfunctory office, and I can not quite determine what message would be most profitable to him and most appropriate to the occasion. He has lately come out of Union Seminary, which is the center of the theological controversy now so rife in our church; and this discussion has already had considerable effect upon his mind and his thought."

"You do not fear his becoming 'unsound' in theol-

ogy, merely because he has been a student in Union Seminary?"

"By no means, Alice," he answered, with a smile; "but what I do apprehend in his case is, that he will incline too far to the negative aspects of the broader and more liberal theology that is seeking a foothold in our church—he has dropped a few remarks in my ears that indicate this unmistakably. The 'Higher Criticism' seems to have a special charm for him; and I have some fears that he will be more disposed to point out the errors he finds in the Bible in order to dispute its 'inerrancy,' than he will be to emphasize the living truth which it contains. There is also some danger—which is not an uncommon thing among 'Liberals'—of his becoming very dogmatic himself, even while most severely criticising the dogmatism of others! But, while he may love the flavor of heresy too well, I know that he has a noble and enthusiastic spirit, and is anxious to prove himself a faithful and useful preacher."

"You have full confidence in his ability to fill his pulpit, haven't you?"

"Yes; but at the same time, it might have been much better for him, if he had gone to some smaller field until he acquired a few years' experience."

"You can give him the benefit of your experience, Henry—he has always sought your counsel."

"Ministerial experience is a very hard thing to communicate from one man to another, whether it be of any value or not; but even if I could transfer mine to him, I could not give him such a wife as I have to insure his success."

This tribute to her devotion and efficiency Alice rewarded with a very gracious smile, and responded; "There is no man whose friendly exhortation he will hear more willingly than yours, Henry"—and then, with

beaming eyes—"this will also be an opportunity for you to let your ministerial brethren know your convictions in reference to Inspiration and certain other doctrines of the Confession of Faith!"

"Yes, Alice, it is due to them as well as myself that they should understand me more clearly. I would be very glad to relieve them of all *uneasiness* in reference to my theology; but I fear some of them will be hurt, if I speak too freely."

"You should avoid giving offense, if possible, Henry; and, if you speak in a very noble and reverent spirit, as I know you will, they will not be hurt, whether they agree with you or not; and perhaps some of them—especially the younger preachers—will be very grateful for the benefit of your study and thought!"

"O, Alice, what a ministering angel you are!" he exclaimed, as he drew her close to his side.

"I only want you to bear witness to the light that God has given you," she answered, with a radiant smile.

Elwood addressed himself to the preparation of this charge with unwonted zeal and assiduity, Alice spending two or three hours every day in his study, and bestowing on his work, as he expressed it, a heaven-born sympathy and interest.

"I must hear you deliver this charge, Henry," she said to him a few days before the time set for the installation, even if I should never hear you preach again!"

She smiled as she spoke; but there was something in her tone that nearly startled him.

"O, Alice, don't express yourself in that way—still, I would be very glad of your presence on this occasion, as the members of the Presbytery will watch my utterances very closely—I can bear the 'pressure' that will rest upon me more easily, if you are there."

"You are strong enough to bear it all yourself," she

answered, with renewed cheerfulness; "but I am very anxious to see your power and excellence as a preacher impressed upon the members of your Presbytery—*that is the only way you can make them understand your theological views!*"

"And yet you would not have me disturb the peace of the church, Alice?"

"You will not be a disturber, Henry; on the contrary, your ministerial brethren will honor your courage and devotion, if they do not pray that a portion of your spirit may fall upon them."

The charge * to Harry Howard was delivered in the calm, clear tones for which Elwood was noted, and was listened to with rapt attention by the Presbytery, although it was very plain that some of the older members, especially, were surprised at the boldness of his utterances. But it was equally plain that the spirit and temper of his discourse commanded their highest admiration; and if he may be said to have won a victory over them, it was such a victory as left no sting, and added no sorrow thereto.

Harry Howard's attention and appreciation surpassed

* MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER:

If I were to announce a Scriptural text as the basis of my remarks to you on this occasion, it would be the exhortation of St. Paul, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." This sublime truth does not address itself to our senses, or to our "natural" understanding. It comes down to us from God out of heaven, and appeals to our higher natures and our nobler faculties; and we can not comprehend it or even believe it from any material or selfish standpoint. It is a spiritual truth, and must be spiritually discerned.

There be many qualities and qualifications of the true preacher; but their roots must all be planted in the soil of service and sacrifice; all his motives and purposes must pass through this crucible; all his gifts and powers must be laid down on this altar. He who does not delight to serve, he who is not ready for any sacrifice that may be demanded of him, can not fill the preacher's sacred office in a manner acceptable to God or his fellow-men.

As certainly as man has a brain, as certainly as he has a stomach, as certainly as he has hands and feet, so certainly has he a moral and religious nature; and it is your high function to minister to this nature, to quicken it, and to inspire it.

How high and holy is your Art—how pure and noble should be your purpose!

his highest expectations, and gave him a new realization of the blessedness of his labors in the Mission Sunday Schools of New York.

And such light as beamed from the eyes of his devoted Alice while he was speaking—was it a reflection from the shores of the other world?

“Indeed, Henry, you surpassed yourself to-night,” she said to him, throwing her arms around his neck, as soon as the family where they were staying had retired for the night, and they were alone in their room; “my pleasure in your preaching increases every time I hear you—I almost fear it is becoming too great for this world!” she added, as she pressed her lips to his forehead.

By some influence that they understood not, they sat in their chairs discussing various features and details of his future work, her vision seeming to him almost supernaturally clarified and enlarged. Then they talked of the training and education of their own boys; and here again her seeming—was it only *seeming*?—penetration into the future greatly surprised him.

The clock had struck twelve, when she suddenly

The stars of heaven have scarcely more room to run their shining courses, than you have opportunity to serve the people of this day and generation.

To the end that you may qualify yourself for this high service, let me exhort you to become a student and lover of Mother Nature. The heavens [and the earth] declare the glory of God; and you should be able in some measure to interpret the message that they bring.

I can scarcely conceive of any subject you may wish to present to your hearers, on which you may not derive both light and inspiration from reverent communion with all forms of life and beauty that you find in the natural world.

I do not merely mean that you should explore the material creation for figures and analogies wherewith to clothe and adorn your message, but that you should drink in the life and essence of Nature, and become acquainted with her inmost soul!

Whatever be your reverence and regard for the things that are old, let me urge you likewise to bring forth the things that are new, not occasionally, but constantly. The hungrier men are, the more they will cherish the newly fallen manna; the thirstier they are, the more they will desire to drink the water that is fresh from the fountain.

I do not mean that you must always present new facts and new theories—much less should you cultivate new and sensational styles of preaching; but your mind and soul should ever be charged with new and fresh thoughts, fresh

changed the order of their conversation, by saying to him, very earnestly: "Henry, don't you believe that Dr. Vernon and Clara Martin still love each other?"

"I would hardly think so, Alice; they have met quite often the last two years, and I have seen no signs of their former attachment."

"But, Henry, as I have said to you before, they may have feelings of tenderness for each other that they both shrink from manifesting; and after so long a separation, they may need help in coming to an understanding—we were helped, you remember!" she added, smiling very archly.

"If any one can do them service in this respect, you can, Alice, but—"

"I know how serious their separation has been," she interrupted; "but I would almost lay down my life to see Clara's happiness secured—and he, too, is so noble, so pure, so good. They ought not to be separated as they now are; they are not too old to love each other again!"

Early the next morning they took the train for Excelsior.

feelings and fresh knowledge, drawn from your study of books and your contact with your fellow-men.

And let me especially urge upon you the importance of sympathetic association with the children, with the lambs of your flock. For your own sake, as well as theirs, you should learn to gather these in your arms and carry them in your bosom. If you will do this, you will never grow old! Your hair may become gray; your face may be covered with wrinkles; your form may be bent with age; but your spirit will always be as young and fresh as the morning light!

Whatever "doctrines" you may believe and cherish, you can not preach the TRUTH unless the name of Christ is written upon your forehead, and his teachings are incarnated in your life and character. Your personality and your message can not be separated—the latter can only be true as the former is true!

I need not remind you that this is an age of scientific and philosophical activity and progress; and you must expect your message to be constantly questioned and challenged; and wherever you go, men will ask you to show them the sign and seal of your commission.

You must confront not only the INTOLERANT and un-philosophical—may I not also say un-scientific?—opposition of Ingersoll, but the subtle mysticism of Renan, the scientific researches of Darwin, and the comprehensive philosophy of Herbert Spencer and hosts of others.

"How glad the children will be to see us, Henry," said Alice, as soon as their train came in sight of Excelsior; "had you thought of the fact that this is the first time I have been separated from them over night?" And then, as she looked out of the car window: "We have reached the Excelsior creek embankment—how steep and high it looks!"

But she did not see the broken rail a few rods ahead of the train, else she would have clung to her husband's side more closely than she did.

A moment or two later, their car took on a peculiarly quivering motion, and, without waiting for its passengers to realize their situation, rolled down the steep embankment!

The accident was attended with the usual result in such cases—so many "killed," so many "seriously injured," so many "slightly injured."

Among the latter was Henry Elwood. He very quickly extricated himself from the *debris* around him, and realized that the wound on his head was only a slight one—but where was Alice?

She had been thrown several feet from him; and it

And this disposition to doubt and sift and analyze your every utterance you will meet not only among the leaders and exponents of public sentiment, but also among the masses of the people, among church-members and church-goers, as well as among those who do not attend your services.

To meet this condition of the public mind, you must needs be yourself a THINKER. You can not put down "Infidelity" and defy "Agnosticism," and justify your message by ex cathedra utterances. You should be well versed in the standard literature of the day, both orthodox and heterodox, and should be familiar, as far as possible, with all the theories and arguments of the various schools of philosophy, as well as with the researches and revelations of scientists.

All these things should make you appreciate more fully the beauty and excellence of our holy religion!

Moreover, your people have a right to your highest and best thought, and to all the activities of your mind and soul. If you have met the Lord face to face upon the mountain, they want the message you have received inscribed upon the tables of their hearts. If you have heard his still small voice after the wind and the earthquake and the fire have passed by, you should not fail to utter his words in their ears, that they, too, may be made wise.

You should be an Artist; and I would have you reveal every accent of the Holy Ghost that you receive, and paint every gleam of light that comes to you from the throne of the Eternal!

took him but a second or two to see that, with a number of other passengers, she was caught between some timbers of the car, from which she could not be extricated without considerable effort.

"Are you hurt, Alice?" he anxiously inquired, as he hastened to her rescue.

"Not badly, I hope," she answered; and just then the cry was raised that the car was on fire!

It was at the other end, however; and as she saw the flames just beginning to rise, she quickly cried to him, "Take out those nearest the fire first, Henry!—you will reach me in time!"

She spoke so clearly and emphatically that he obeyed; and by the rapid and almost superhuman exertions of himself and a few uninjured passengers and employes, all the imprisoned ones were rescued from the fire. As the place of the accident was less than a mile from the corporation lines of the city, very soon large numbers of the people came out to see who was hurt, and to render such assistance as might be needed.

One of the families belonging to Elwood's church

You should be a Singer; and I would have you repeat every note of Cherubim and Seraphim that your soul may hear!

Even your prayers and hymns and formal services should be good tidings of great joy to your people; and your every sermon should sound like a revelation from the skies!

I can not promise you, however, that in this process of thinking and reasoning, you yourself shall be free from all doubts and questions concerning the symbols of our faith; nay, you may have doubts that will sorely try your heart and conscience.

When such doubts come, think not that some STRANGE thing has happened to you, but remember that your mind and soul need to be thus exercised, for the strengthening of your manhood, and to prepare you for a higher and holier message than you have yet preached. The angels of light will come to your relief, but not until you have used your utmost strength and your highest faculties in searching for truth and wisdom.

I can give you no rule or formula for the solution of these problems; but I can exhort you to be very patient, to be very humble, to be very reverent, and to be very earnest in every good word and work before you.

I can exhort you to master your doubts so far as to keep them in the background, that in the foreground you may present whatever message of CONVICTION the Spirit of Truth may communicate to your soul!

lived a very short distance from the wreck, and remembering that their minister and his wife were expecting to return by this train, they hastened to the spot, with the greatest anxiety.

The injured woman was placed in their carriage as soon as they arrived; and they insisted on taking her to their house until a doctor could be called, and the extent of her injuries be ascertained; but, with many thanks for their kindness, she said, with an emphasis that could not be resisted, "I want to see my children—take me home!"

When they reached the parsonage, they found a large number of parishioners and acquaintances both inside and outside; for the news of Alice's injury had spread very rapidly over the city, and all who knew her were anxious to learn how serious it was.

Henry carried her into the house, and laid her on the bed, and at once telephoned for Vernon.

The message found the latter in his office, and he obeyed the summons without a moment's delay.

The examination was made, and showed a num-

How unsatisfactory, how unprofitable, how ungracious, must be the office of the preacher who attempts to feed his people with the dry husks of denial and negation. How bitter must be their cry of reproach, because he gives them stones instead of living bread!

As a preparation for the reception of truth, there must indeed be some negative teaching, just as the forest must be cleared before the ground can be plowed; but whenever this is the case, see to it that your purpose is to present a living message. Remember that Christ came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them!

From whatever standpoint you may regard the issue or conflict between orthodoxy and heterodoxy in our church, let not its importance be unduly magnified in your mind, lest you neglect the weightier matters of the divine law, which are neither the special tenets of orthodoxy nor those of heterodoxy, but judgment, mercy and faith. This conflict—if we are to call it such—is not like the meeting of an irresistible force and an immovable body, (if I may use this figure); but rather is it like the operation of the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which together hold the earth in its orbit, and cause its unceasing revolution about the sun!

The doctrine of election, or predestination, as now stated in our Confession, may seriously offend your notion of the divine wisdom and justice; and it must be conceded that it would be difficult to reconcile ANY statement of this doctrine with human free agency and responsibility; but the denial of fore-ordination

ber of external wounds and a very severe shock to the nervous system, but no broken bones.

"She will need very careful nursing, Elwood, and will soon recover"—but Vernon's candor compelled him to add, although he knew the words would pierce his friend's heart most sorely—"if there is no internal injury!"

There were too many inquiring friends in and about the house for Henry to question him more closely at the time; and, after a careful dressing of all the wounds that his examination had revealed, and repeating his injunctions as to rest and quiet, Vernon took his leave, promising to call again in the evening.

When he returned about sunset, he found the house still filled and still surrounded with anxious friends, and when he reached his patient's chamber, he saw Clara Martin by her bedside, watching every breath and every motion of her suffering friend.

Although Clara lived two or three miles away, at the first news of the accident, she had hastened to the Elwood parsonage, anxious to minister to the comfort of the one who had so often cheered and comforted her.

would only shift your difficulty, at best. The origin of evil is inexplicable; and its existence—in the last analysis—can only be disposed of by referring it to the divine ORDER and government. Be not too curious concerning this "high mystery," nor too anxious to define the manner and method of the Divine Sovereignty with the narrow circles of either your affirmation or negation. Rather teach men to love and adore the Inscrutable Power that reigneth over all things, without beginning or end, and exhort them to find their peace and comfort in the everlasting order of the heavens and the earth. Rather be yourself lost in unceasing wonder and admiration, as you behold time and space, mind and matter, things present and things to come, moving in unchanging and eternal harmony around the throne of God!

You may not believe in the literal or absolute "inerrancy" of the Bible; but this should not prevent your offering it to your people as a veritable fountain of inspiration, and as PROFITABLE for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

If your "higher criticism" of its contents leads you to deny its verbal inspiration, learn from it the more fully—and preach as you learn—that the Spirit of God ALWAYS inspires and quickens the souls of men. Preach that God speaks to us as certainly as he spoke to the prophets and righteous men of old, and that he would have us hear every word that proceedeth out of his mouth. Give not your people the hard shell of this truth, but the living kernel. Teach them that

She looked into Vernon's face most appealingly; but it was an appeal for his highest skill in Alice's behalf, and O, how she sought an assurance from his lips that the patient's injuries were not beyond his treatment!

Vernon was touched by her tears and her great anxiety, and responded with a look of sincerest sympathy; but the coveted assurance that there was no danger could not be given.

And to Elwood's anxious inquiries, he could only repeat what he had said at his former visit.

Scores of friends, comprising women of all walks of life, were at hand, offering their services in nursing and caring for the injured woman, but Vernon found it necessary to issue strict orders for the exclusion of all visitors from her room—only Clara Martin being allowed to remain.

And hour after hour, and day after day, the faithful Clara continued her watching and nursing, almost refusing both food and sleep, that she might relieve the sufferings of her dear friend, and, if possible, save her life.

Notwithstanding her great suffering, Alice insisted that

Inspiration is the BREATH OF GOD to quicken their reason, not to stifle it, and a glorious light to open their eyes, not to close them!

In this connection, you may well remember that the church to which you minister is not a mass of machinery, to be regulated and controlled by the iron bands of dogmatic theology, but a living organism, to be sustained by breathing, thinking and feeling.

It were an easy office to tell men how many things they can NOT accomplish by prayer; but your purpose should ever be to tell them—almost without ceasing—that we sustain such a relation to the Infinite Father, that he must needs hear every utterance of our souls, and will give the proper answer to all our petitions. But while you preach thus, forget not also to preach that true prayer is ever **LAWFUL**, not unlawful; that it is obedient, not disobedient; that it is pious, not impious, or presumptuous.

"Total Depravity," as a distinct dogma, may hardly find a place in the nomenclature of your theology; but this will not dispose of the **TENDENCY TO EVIL** that you find in human nature everywhere—saying nothing of men's actual transgressions. Call this tendency by whatever name you will, the **FACT** of its existence remains. Surely men need to be purified and converted (continuously) to prepare them for the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness!

You may not be able to solve the mystery of the Trinity any more clearly

her children should have the full privilege of her room, and many hours were spent in talking to them and bestowing her love and caresses upon them.

Only the most pressing calls could induce Henry to leave her bedside; and whenever these came, she urged him to go, and as soon as he returned would ask for a full account of the office he had rendered to those who were in trouble or distress.

Vernon spent many hours each day with his patient, exercising his best skill in her behalf—but the long looked for time when he could assure Elwood that all danger was over did not come.

More than a week was occupied in this incessant watching, and this hoping against hope, when one morning, soon after daylight, and while they were awaiting Vernon's arrival, the patient called her husband to her bedside, and clasping his hands in hers, looked into his face very intently for a few minutes, and then said to him—how feeble and yet how clear was her voice—“Henry, my dear Henry, I have thought from the very first my injury would prove fatal, but for your sake I have tried to persuade myself I could recover—”

than your fathers before you have done; but be earnest in preaching how God is immanent in all his ways and works, how he was and is manifest in the flesh, and how his Spirit pervades the universe and abides in the hearts and souls of men.

O, that the divinity of Christ might become a vital inspiration to our churches, and that we might all realize that he is our elder brother!

I know not what perplexity, if any, may be in your mind concerning the doctrine of the Atonement; but I would have you realize, above all things, that it involves the great law of sacrifice, which must be fulfilled by all of us, if we would accomplish the end of our creation and make our lives worth the living. O, my brother, I charge you to bow your head very low before the unspeakable mystery of this obligation, and do not refuse to follow the Christ, when he so commands, through every scene of privation, humiliation and pain, even unto death!

You may not be able to determine the limits of the divine mercy and compassion, either in this world or the next; but you may assert with utmost emphasis, that no man can sin against light and truth and wisdom without wronging his own soul—and who shall measure the wrong that any one may do himself by persistent and continued sinning? Whatever notions of “future punishment”

“O, Alice, you *must* recover—it can not be otherwise—we could not bear to lose you!”

She lifted her hands to his eyes, and tried to wipe away the bitter tears that were beginning to fall, and presently continued: “No, Henry, it is God’s will that I should die; and I know you will bear it manfully and bravely.”

Her voice was so calm, and her smile so sweet, that his paroxysm of grief was partially suppressed; but he still cried, “O, Alice, I can not preach, I can not *live*, without you!”

Again she raised her hands to his face, and, after smoothing his cheeks for a moment, said, “God will still be with you, Henry, and you can live for him and your church. Your ministry is only begun. You ought to preach forty years more before you retire, if you should retire before you die. Don’t get weary of your work, Henry, and, for my sake, be always cheerful and hopeful with your people. If, after I am gone, I am ever permitted to come back to earth, I want to find you in your pulpit every Sunday, preaching the same message, with the same dear voice that has always delighted me so!”

you may find among your hearers, fail not to tell them that they are always standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, and always receiving—in their lives and characters—his sentence of approval or condemnation, according to the deeds done in the body. Tell them that they are passing to his right hand, or his left hand, with every choice that they make between righteousness and unrighteousness!

Believe not those who tell you that “miracles do not happen,” nor yet those who say that “the age of miracles is past.” Rather believe and preach that the Divine hand is visible in ALL the phenomena of Nature, and that the Divine power worketh hitherto, and worketh unceasingly. Rather preach that the miracle of miracles—the miracle that is wrought from everlasting to everlasting—the miracle of which all other miracles are but types and shadows and object lessons—is the supremacy of moral and spiritual power!

He who SEES the working of this miracle is a believer of believers:—he who doubts or denies it is a heretic of heretics.

But with all your thought and study and prayer, the mystery of the Divine government will never be fully solved.

You must be content to see through a glass darkly, realizing that only God can give the final answer to all the questionings of your soul!

Then she called the children, and after fondly kissing them, and charging them always to love and obey their dear papa, she said to Henry: "How thankful I am that *you* were spared! You will be both father and mother to our children, I know, and teach them to be noble and good!"

And looking into the faces of her husband and children, she summoned all her power, and softly sang in their ears:

"We shall sleep, but not forever,
There will be a glorious dawn;
We shall meet to part, no never,
On the RESURRECTION MORN!"

Her end was fast approaching; but the work of her life was not yet finished.

Vernon came in a few minutes after; and, while he was counting the pulsations of her wrist, she clasped his hand, and said to him, in very feeble accents: "Doctor, you have done all you could for me—but God wills that I should die!" and still holding his hand in hers, she gently called, "Clara!"

As Clara bent over the bed to render whatever service might be wanted of her, the dying woman seized her

Stand forth, then, in the strength and excellence of your manhood, and remember that he who has clean hands and a pure heart may safely walk by faith and not by sight.

Lay fast hold of the power that maketh for righteousness, and whatever strain may be put upon your mind or your conscience, be patient to endure as seeing him who is invisible!

Let your pulpit be a tower of light from which the stars are watched, and a place where the Divine Shekinah is visible to every hearer and worshiper!

O, the beauty and excellence of the power that turns men from darkness to light, and from sin unto righteousness.

It is the finest of all the fine arts, and a pearl of greater price than all the riches and treasures of the earth

It is the flavor of the apple; it is the fragrance of the flower; it is the beauty of the sky; it is the brightness of the sun; it is the song of the morning stars; it is the breath of him who created the worlds!

In whatsoever measure you have this power, my brother, let me exhort you to cherish it in your heart of hearts and cultivate it to the utmost capacity of your mind and soul. Cultivate it—cultivate it—and again I say to you, **CULTIVATE IT!**

hand also, and placing it in Vernon's, looked up into their faces with a smile so like an angel's, that they stood before her entranced. Their eyes met; the memory of their youthful love rushed upon their consciousness; they looked down upon the pale face before them; and, with no other word or sign or token, the souls of Homer Vernon and Clara Martin were united once more.

Serving and blessing to the last!

They continued to watch by her bedside; but she could speak no more. The bright smile was fading away; the dear eyes were growing dim; the faithful hands were losing their warmth; and, in a few hours, all was over!

The silver chord was loosed—the golden bowl was broken—the precious heart was still—the beloved Alice was dead!

And two days later, amid the tears and sorrow of a great congregation—the largest ever assembled in any church building in Excelsior,—Dr. Goodway preached her funeral discourse from a text which awoke a responsive echo in every breast: “AND THEY THAT BE WISE SHALL SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; AND THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE STARS FOREVER AND EVER!”

THE END.



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